Fox And Hunt Look Good In Pre-Season

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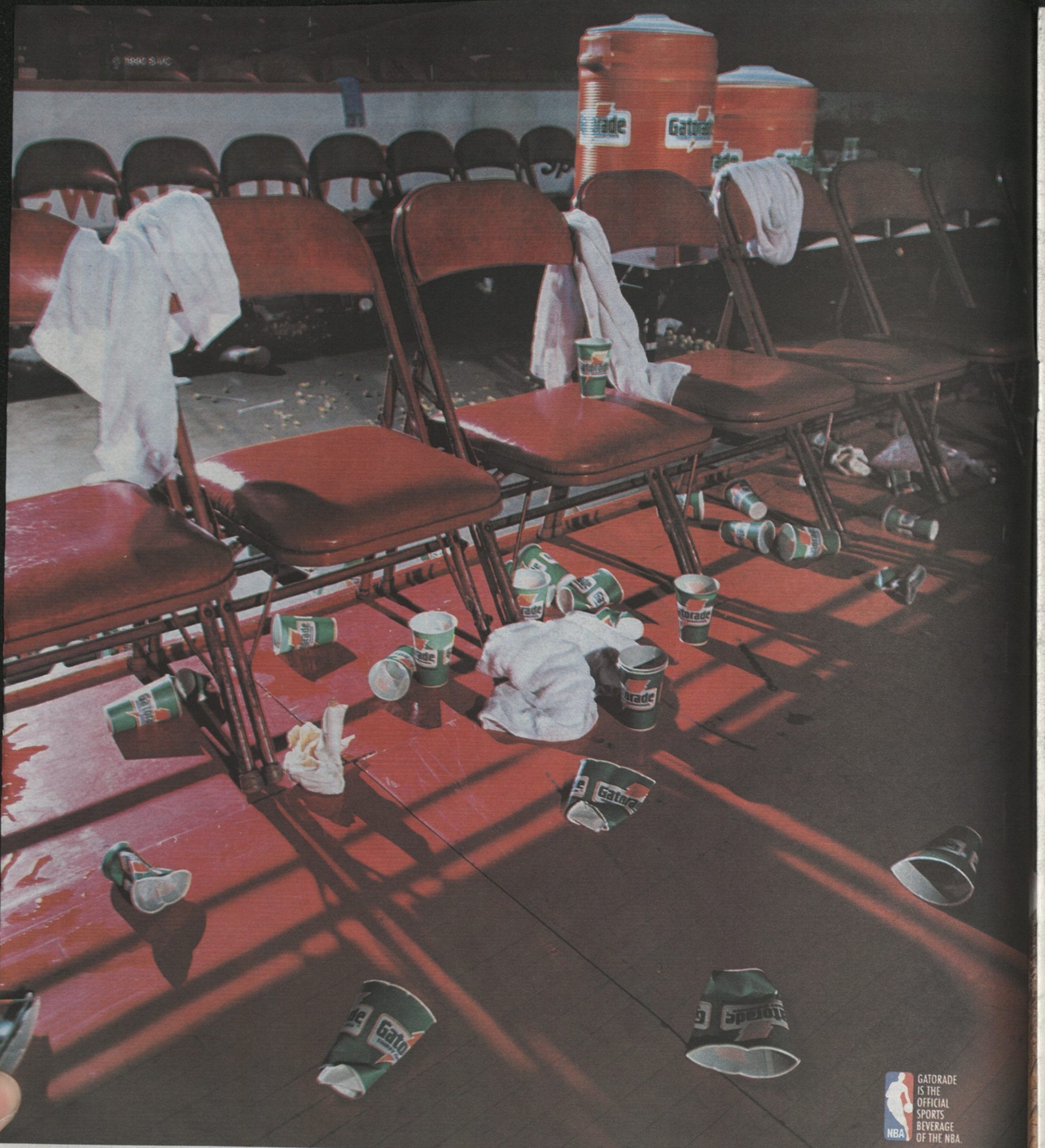
CELTICS PRIDE

Larry Bird

Will Larry Go For The Gold?

Volume 6, Issue 16 September 23, 1991 $3.00



The success of any team can be attributed to the strength of their bench.

Sound Off.....

The CBA Has Talent

Dear Sound Off,

I just finished reading the July 26 issue of Celtics Pride and I have a few comments. I am a die-hard Celtics fan and have been for twenty years. I am also a season ticket holder for the Quad City Thunder of the CBA. I have watched many talented players come and go in this league, and I have some proposals. First of all, I believe with a little experience, AJ Wynder could become a very steady point guard. He can hit the open jumper and find the open man when needed. He was the glue for the Thunder, who would have won the CBA championship if the Celtics had not called him up. If you're looking for defense and hustle, how about Barry Mitchell of the Thunder. Ever seen a man try to go through a basketball standard for a loose ball? I'll send you the tape if you'd like to see it. Finally, the two most talented players I've seen in the CBA that are not currently in the NBA, Anthony Bowie and Enis Whatley. If we could snag one of these guys, Brian Shaw would ride the pine. Just a point of view from a slightly different angle. The CBA does have some talent. Just ask Kevin Gamble.

Mark Taghon
Moline, IL

Mark, CP is sure that the CBA has talented players, and Celtics' scouts know who these players are, but we at CP find it difficult to believe that one of these players would put Shaw on the bench.

The Chief Does Smile

Dear Sound Off,

I wish to commend Robert Parish and The Basketball Hall of Fame for giving many people the chance to meet "The Chief." I was very excited to learn that "The Chief" was doing a free autograph session at The Basketball Hall of Fame.

My two hour drive was well worth it. Robert was very polite and friendly to all. He didn't seem to mind all the requests to pose in a picture, and he did it with a smile. I must say, this was the most I have ever seen Robert smile!

Robert signed whatever object that was placed in front of him. Free photos were provided for him to sign, along with a souvenir for everyone.

Once again, let me thank Robert Parish and The Basketball Hall of Fame for such a great day, and hopefully more to come.

Joanne Witkin
Mahopac Falls, NY

Fox Was A Great Choice

Dear Sound Off,

Not only am I a big Celtics fan, but throughout the ACC tournament and the Final Four games I have been a follower of Rick Fox. He is an excellent player, a leader, and a competitor. He proved himself to be a strong defensive player and an explosive offensive force.

I was thrilled when the Celtics drafted him, of course. I was amazed when the only applause was a smattering of barely polite applause, after Red Auerbach practically forced the group to. How could they not have heard of him? He led UNC to the Final Four, and he would have been drafted a lot higher if he hadn't had a bad game versus Kansas. Fortunately, the Celtics saw past that single bad game.

I think Fox will make the ideal Celtic. He is a hard worker and he will greatly improve their defense if called upon to. He will be a good addition to the "Zip Boys." I think the Celtics got exactly what they needed in Fox, and I cannot wait to see what the Celtics will do next year. And I will continue to support Fox, especially now that he's joined the best team in the NBA.

Judy Ring
Orrington, ME

This Might Be The Year

Dear Sound Off,

I recently received a copy of Celtics Pride and was delighted to find out that others also suffer from the same strange malady that afflicts me. My physician has diagnosed my sickness as a case of Psychosis Celticitis. The doctor's suspicion is that the disease is transmitted through the picture tube found in various rooms in our house. This sickness may have been genetically passed on to my youngest son. My oldest son is not afflicted with it, though he seems to be suffering from Delirium Packerosis, a disease generally restricted to the geographical area east of the Twin Cities and north of Soldier Field.

He may have inherited this from his mother who had a mild case of Rabidus Badgeritis in her youth, a sickness now virtually eradicated through the wonders of medical science and poor recruiting.

What more can anyone say about Larry, Kevin and the Chief. If Mt. Rushmore were still virginal, the Big Three would have to be seriously considered as worthy occupants (though Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln ain't a bad front line either). Chris did a marvelous job and might well have brought another banner to the Garden rafters in his first year except for that old Celtic injury bugaboo. Special kudos to Derek Smith for his spirited play against Indiana — and Chuckie P. — in game 5 and Eddie Pinckney who was magnificent down the stretch. Chris said the Big Three had one more championship in them. If Larry comes back okay, this just might be the year.

Harry Wolk
Des Moines, IA

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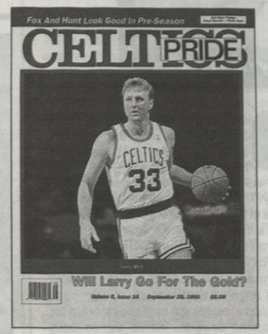


Cover.....

7 .....Feeling Better Than Ever
For the first time in almost three years it seems that Larry Bird has a sense of optimism that he won't feel much pain when he steps onto the hardwood. This optimism has brought out a zest for his future as an athlete. *Cover photography by Steve Lipofsky.*

Features.....

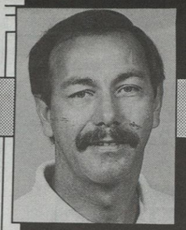
8 .....The Big Three Will Stay Together
With Kevin McHale signed to a contract extension through the 1992-93 season, the Celtics hypothetically will have their powerful frontline together at least until the end of that season.

14 .....Trying To Fulfill A Dream
The level of talent at this year's rookie/free agent camp was probably the best the team has seen in a number of years. Six hopefuls are hoping to get a "look" in October, but they may fall prey to the numbers game.

Departments.....

4 — Coaches Corner
5 — Color It Green
6 — Halfcourt Press
10 — Red On Roundball
11 — Innerview
12 — Confidential
15 — NBA Notebook
16 — Double Dribbles
17 — *CASEY'S CORNER* — new column
22 — The Fan's Eyeview

All photography in this magazine is shot on Kodak film.



Coaches Corner

A Pre-Season Full Of Optimism

By Chris Ford

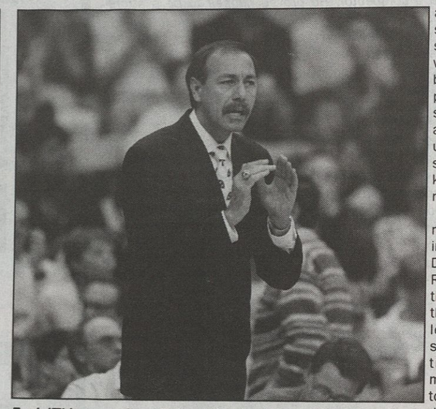
Our play in both the rookie camp and the Los Angeles Summer League during the past month gave this coach a relaxing three weeks at our summer home, on the ocean in New Jersey. This game, like all the professional sports in the United States and Canada, is really a twelve month a year profession. Our draft resulted in the good young player, Rick Fox from North Carolina. I thought our performance in the camps in Wellesley and in Los Angeles were already strong, positive steps in building a contending team for the coming season. We've signed both Rick Fox and a rookie free agent, Anderson Hunt, an early entry guard from Nevada-Las Vegas.

The two played very well in Los Angeles. What they give to our team is something we're trying to instill in all of our players, for forty-eight minutes, night in and night out — hard, aggressive defense and a willingness to perform the subtle things on offense which make a team function at an optimal level.

A succinct description of our approach in the summer: we play a very basic game, looking to see if a player has the physical skill and the basic basketball intelligence to play his game at the professional level. We look more at a player's skills than we do necessarily if he can always put the ball in the basket. For example, I thought we played well in Los Angeles, though our shooting was only in the 40% range. For example, Rick has shown us a willingness to body up on defense. His play against a pretty powerful player such as Randy White of Dallas was something we took home with us. In addition to that, though we lost three in a row in Los Angeles and were struggling because of that poor marksmanship, the work ethic defensively remained consistent for the entire time we were there. Experts raved about Anderson Hunt's offense (particularly in the transition game) when he was the Most Valuable Player in the Final Four in 1990. But what he showed us, like Fox, was that he was a persistent, determined defensive player, end to end. You don't teach that, especially in the NBA. That willingness has to be there.

A final note about the kids, was that Rick Fox was in excellent condition in Los Angeles, a fitness he wasn't able to achieve in Wellesley at Babson College at the rookie camp. He'd been in school, had been limited to weight work and three-on-three games. But in Los Angeles, he'd had time to become more fit and we were very impressed with him (I suspect it didn't hurt also that his three-on-three work in Chapel Hill was with guys like James Worthy and Sam Perkins).

All of this of course is something we're using as we look toward October. We've been in frequent contact with Larry Bird and Kevin McHale, two of three players who had surgery this summer (Derek Smith, who we anticipated in camp, also had further work done on his knee). There's been a wealth of material written on Larry's intentions concerning the Olympic Team; what both Red Auerbach and Dave Gavitt, as well as the coaching staff, are ecstatic about is that this is an indication of how well Bird's been progressing after his back surgery of June 7th. Dave Gavitt and Arnold Scheller (our team physician) traveled to visit with both men this summer (Larry's been doing a lot of his rehab work in Boston, too). Kevin's been progressing well from the work rehab.



Ford: "This game, like all the professional sports in the United States and Canada is really a twelve month a year profession."

What Dave and Arnie found from both Larry and Kevin was both were upbeat about the coming year; it's been rough for Kevin, who's had surgery in three of the past five summers, but even with this, he's ready to play again, and with an enthusiastic attitude. I think the critical issue with Larry in terms of playing has always been his health. For Larry, basketball is his treasure. If he's well, the treasure is giving off a glow. If his back is virtually killing him, he doesn't even want to look at it. But Larry too, is enthusiastic, more than I've seen from him in the past (it seems) several years.

In terms of structuring our team, we're relying on Larry, Kevin and Robert Parish to play key roles for us this season. I don't think we'd consider a trade (many writers have criticized us, arguing we've landed on a plateau, claiming we're unable to contend with a frontcourt this age).

We wouldn't trade, keeping in mind you never say never, but in reality, we wouldn't receive equitable market value in return, most importantly we totally believe these men are still among the better players in the game. With our efforts to balance minutes, we think they are still capable of playing major roles in contributing to a championship effort.

Where else do you receive play from a veteran threesome that is mature, experienced in understanding what it takes to win, and as capable in the game itself? I prefer to look at Bird, Parish and McHale and focus on their strengths, their assets and look elsewhere to continue building up to support them. A final statistical note: they averaged 29 minutes a game last season and we'll keep it around that number.

I think there's a multitude of talent in support. In both Dee Brown and Reggie Lewis, I think there are potentials that really are limitless. Dee Brown showed last spring that he has the mental strength (not to mention the prodigious athleticism and savvy) to be a big-time player in this league. Reggie has shown pretty much the same thing now for the past three years — a player with All-Star capabilities.

In addition, regardless of negative press, I still have great confidence in Brian Shaw. I've spoken with him frequently this summer, and although a sprained ankle hurt him, we liked his play in the Summer League in L.A. Perhaps it was the best thing that he did struggle in the playoffs; it will make him work that much harder this fall. One man whose play positively shone in the playoffs was Ed Pinckney; Eddie finally became accustomed to his role during the past three months of the season.

In the playoffs, he was the type of player we need — a guy who pays his dues in the subtleties, rebounds, and gets after it on defense. If he continues, I'd term him an invaluable role player, the type of player who is a typical Celtic. Kevin Gamble, Joe Kleine, Derek Smith and Stojko Vrankovic are all men who have positive assets for our team; we started Kevin last season and only matchup problems and the halfcourt offenses of the playoffs limited his effectiveness then.

Joe has lost fifteen pounds and we look for improvement from him, as well as Stojko, whose United States basketball aptitude has improved measurably through his work with Dave Cowens. Derek could be an important role player for us, but there is a question of health.

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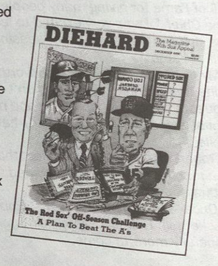

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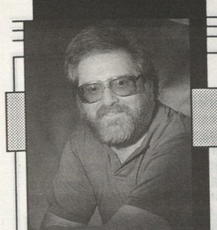


Color It Green

No News Is Good News

By Jim Bianchine

It has often been the belief (and hope in this case) of many that no news is good news.

That must have been the case for a good portion of the summer for all true Celtics fans bathed in shamrocks — those who treat their loyalty to their team like a religion.

So much rides on the recovery of Larry Bird and Kevin McHale, both of whom had off-season surgery, as you well know.

Curiously there were few updates throughout the long hot summer, other than a note here and there about basic progress and little detail about rehabilitation programs.

Without the usual updates on the conditions of the two superstars we all are accustomed to during the regular season, there seemed cause for concern.

Fear not brave souls, things appear to be fine, based on recent reports.

McHale must be feeling just fine following surgery to his left ankle. He signed a two-year extension through the 1992-93 season. The thought of having the game's best low-post player two more seasons must make you tingle.

With contractual details now behind him, I like the idea of McHale being able to concentrate fully on basketball, not that he doesn't anyway.

However, after all he is human. But, don't tell some of the many players who go up against him who don't always feel the same way.

McHale, who will enter his 12th campaign, has been the model of consistency and proved it once again last season despite his ailments.

Over his sparkling career he has averaged 18.7 points and 7.6 rebounds. Last season he nearly matched those numbers to the penny, scoring 18.4 points a game with 7.1 rebounds.

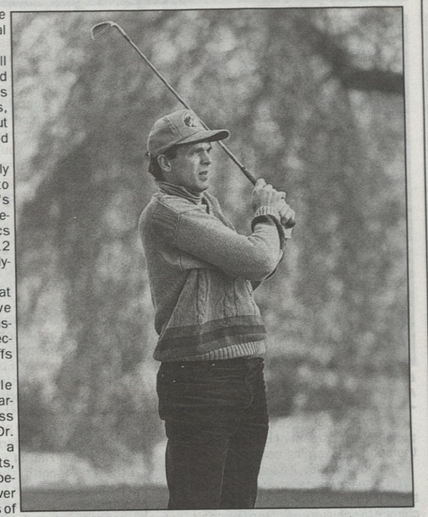
Of even greater concern in the off-season was the health of Bird, who was forced to undergo back surgery for an inflamed disk in an effort to relieve pressure from the spinal nerve — ouch!

Needless to say, we all know how the club fared the season when he was lost for all but six games, and the numbers without him last season suffered in his absence.

The Celtics were nearly unbeatable streaking to a 25-6 record until Bird's problem started to become severe. The Celtics were a humble 10-12 without him after their flying start.

And, lest we forget that the Celtics may have spotted the Detroit Pistons Game 1 in the second round of the playoffs without Bird.

With such little devulged on the 34-year-old superstar's progress following surgery by Dr. Arnold Scheller and a crack team of specialists, for many the summer became nail-biting time over more than the fortunes of the Red Sox.



McHale must be feeling real good after his contract extension through the '92-93 season.

Then, like a bolt from above, news from Indiana crackled like lightning and the sound it made was heard by every man, woman and child in New England.

Bird just had to be feeling better based on recent reports that he is actually considering playing on the Olympic basketball team following the 1991-92 NBA season.

That news in itself has to be encouraging, especially in light of the fact that he initially wasn't going to even consider the possibility.

Of course, realistically that certainly doesn't assure the waiting world that all is well.

One must also consider the flip side of things, as harsh as reality can be.

We can only hope that when that sad day comes when Bird and McHale finally hang up their respective sneakers that will never be replaced, they are able to walk away without a staggered gait.

As much as I dread that faithful day, I hope I see them standing before the wildly cheering crowd up straight without hunched posture and walk away without a limp.

I also hope that there are few Chuck Person types that will openly take a shot at Bird's back during the upcoming season.

It could be a season, at least at the outset, of walking on eggshells. I think we all will cringe every time Larry goes hard to the floor.

The person it will bother least of all, however, is Larry.

Maybe through the miracles of modern medicine, the season ahead may not have to be the last hurrah after all. I for one pray that they both go out on top no matter how hard the thought of no longer having them around is to swallow.

Which now brings me to yet another topic.

There was somewhat of a collective cry that rang out (actually more like a harmonious ugh) when it was learned that the Celtics hiked ticket prices for the 39 Boston Garden games by 17.5 percent.

True, due to the state of the economy a $40 seat (prime up from $34) is at first, well, staggering.

Financial types look more at the hard, cold facts. The Celtics have one of the league's highest payrolls and play in one of the NBA's smallest arenas.

Considering from an esthetic perspective that there may be little time left relatively speaking to see three of the game's greatest players in history, whatever you have to pay may well be worth it.

• • • • • • • •

In case you thought I was just taking it easy hanging around Old Town Country Club or floating around on a rubber raft at the Hallmark Gardens pool this summer, you are wrong (sort of). Below you will find some tidbits that landed on the cutting room floor and somehow missed the previous edition, with of course some late breaking updates.

The rather sticky Bill Cartwright situation was recently solved when the Bulls inked him to a new contract and chose not to break up the old gang that reigns as the new NBA champs. Thinking back at the NBA Finals, though there isn't much spectacular about the series other than the play of the Bulls and of course Air Jordan, the Portland Trail Blazers may have robbed us of a great final that the Lakers didn't at all provide. Those Blazers should again be awfully hard to figure come October...The reviews have been mixed over Celtics rookie-to-be Rick Fox. Only time will tell and judgement should be reserved. I like the fact he comes from a winning program which is so vital to the makeup of a young player...I think it is sad that the Pistons actually paid off a fan for "injuries suffered" during a game in Indiana when Dennis Rodman dove into the crowd for a ball and landed on the courtside faker...You won't recognize the Hawks this season. In my humbled opinion, they traded the heart and soul of the team when they sent Doc Rivers to the Clippers, who finally should be quite good. However games aren't won on paper, though their roster should be impressive.

In the Atlanta youth movement/house cleaning, they rid themselves of veteran Moses Malone who will provide the Bucks great depth at the pivot off the bench. Smart move by Milwaukee. Old Moses has scored over 25,000 points and is the all-time free throw leader in hoop history.

The Hawks will bring in Blair Rasmussen, who is one big man who likes to stay out at the free throw line and pop jumpers rather than mix it up. They expect big things from Stacey Augmon,Rodney Monroe and ex-King Travis Mays.

Mays, who has a world of potential, opted to bag a portion of the season when Sacramento seemed destined to again finish last in the Pacific Division and was thought of as a quitter in no uncertain terms by Jerry Reynolds.

Mays and Rumeal Robinson note that he will finally get a chance to play, and could become a lethal backcourt combination in Dixie.

You also won't recognize the Nuggets, who have replaced Sacramento as the most mismanaged franchise in the NBA, though the Nets may get a share of that title.

They will sorely miss Orlando Woolridge (figure that out?) and retired Bill Hanzlik. But they will not miss anyone more than Michael Adams, now of the Bullets. If anyone can figure out what they are trying to do, please write and tell me. No actually, write them instead...Philadelphia did not pick up the option year on Rick Mahorn at 1.6 million a year. Can't blame them...Though he won't be blessed with overwhelming talent, expect old friend Jimmy Rodgers to do well as the head man in Minnesota...Speaking of old friends, Dallas tendered a qualifying offer to Kelvin Upshaw...I happened to be in Cleveland (don't ask why) on draft day. Over 3,000 fans gathered anxiously awaiting the Cavs' first pick roundly booed the choice of Terrell Brandon of Oregon instead of UNLV's Greg Anthony. He is really going to feel welcome isn't he?

Continued on page 18...

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Halfcourt Press

Should Larry Go For The Gold?

By Kevin C. Doyle

Since we last touched bases, ample time has elapsed to ponder a couple of questions:

— should Larry Bird pursue the Olympic dream?

— what can Anderson Hunt add to the mix for the Celtics?

First, Bird.

It wasn't that long ago that Larry said it was unlikely he'd head to Barcelona in '92 because of his age, his health and the feeling he didn't want to deprive younger players of their shot at the gold.

He still hasn't given an iron-clad guarantee he will play if invited and speculation in such matters is generally a foolhardy endeavor.

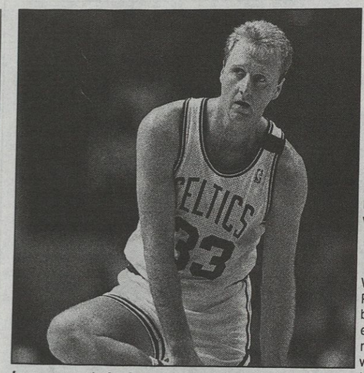
But there could be several possibilities why Bird has wavered.

— Most importantly, his most recent operation seems to have finally rid him of the chronic back pain that plagued him for years. He feels g-o-o-oo-o-o-o-d — and that's B-A-D for the NBA and, possibly, the rest of the world.

— It seems the willingness shown by Magic Johnson and Patrick Ewing to play might stoke Bird's competitive fires as well.

— He's appeared in an NCAA final and won the NBA championship, but Bird never got the shot to go for the gold.

— Perhaps the inherent pride of the Heartlander that he can no longer tolerate the U.S.'s embarrassing string of failures at the international level, the most recent coming at the Pan-Am games.



Larry seems to be feeling good, and that's bad for the NBA.

— The Celtics' Dave Gavitt also happens to be president of U.S.A. Basketball, the sport's governing body.

Should Larry play, if asked and if healthy?

This space casts a vote in the affirmative. At this point, it's a last-in-a-lifetime chance to achieve one of the few goals that have eluded him.

Stay tuned — the invitation-only team will be announced Saturday, September 21.

On the signing of Hunt.

It's going to take time to evaluate him. At 6-1, he's a tweener with a shooter's mindset trapped in a body more suited to a point guard.

Devastated that he was the only one of UNLV's first five that went undrafted, Hunt showed enough all-around skills at rookie camp to warrant another look during training camp. Hence, the contract.

If you're expecting another Dee Brown, stop. They're both 6-1 or so and run the floor — the resemblance ends there. Hunt has a long way to go to get where the Celtics want him.

• • • • • • • • •

BORN IN THE BAY STATE: On Wednesday, August 28, the U.S. Postal Service joined in basketball's centennial celebrations by issuing a commemorative stamp in the city where Springfield (Mass.) College instructor James Naismith invented the game. The 29-cent stamp shows two hands above the basket as one player attempts to dunk and the other defends. Interestingly, the Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield is the only sports shrine that includes a former Postmaster General. The late Larry O'Brien, a Springfield native, served in that capacity, as well as those of Democratic National Committee head and NBA Commissioner. He was inducted this past spring. In commemorating the new stamp, former Notre Dame coach Digger Phelps, a member of the Postal Service's Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, said: "No other sport has brought people together around the world as much as basketball." For the record, Dr. Naismith hung his peach baskets and the first game was played on Dec. 21, 1891.

• • • • • • • • •

THE COOZ COMMEMORATED: If you're a sports trading card buff — or if you just want to re-live a bit of Celtics' history — watch for a limited edition 25-card Bob Cousy set to hit the stores this fall. Cousy teamed with Milton Kahn of Santa Barbara, Calif. to produce a 25-card set which traces Cousy's career from Andrew Jackson H.S. on Staten Island, N.Y. to Holy Cross and on to his championship years with the Celtics. Only 100,000 numbered sets will be sold at $25 apiece.

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE: Wali Jones, the former 76ers star guard, runs the national "Shoot For The STARS (Students Training Around Responsibilities)" program geared towards motivation and goal-setting. The programs is an outgrowth of Concerned Athletes in Action, which Jones helped form in 1969. Now the Community Relations Director of the Miami Heat, Jone averaged more than 20 points per game in 10 NBA seasons and was a key figure on the '67 championship team . . . John Lucas, whose 14-year NBA career was interrupted by recurring drug problems, purchased the Miami Tropics of the United States Basketball League in August and vowed to use the franchise as a tool to help players overcome drug problems. Lucas is the director of chemical dependency treatment and after-care programs for pro athletes. Interestingly, Tropics' coach Kevin Mackey, who resigned at Cleveland State when his drug problems were disclosed, recently completed Lucas's program . . . Julius Erving has joined Jack Nicklaus as a consultant in Golden Bear Sports Management with the goal of passing on his experience and advice on basketball and life to today's youth. Erving, 41, retired in 1987 but was incorporated in 1979 as The Erving Group and Dr. J Enterprises — both designed to manage his career and business affairs.

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A BIG DEAL: Michael Jordan may not be the "real thing" in Coca-Cola's eyes any longer since his promotional deal with the soda king expired on July 31. But, now, everyone "wants to be like Mike" since he signed a multi-million dollar deal with Gatorade on Aug. 8. Jordan, the only team athlete listed in a recent survey of professional sports' top 10 highest-paid athletes, is now the pitchman for 15 companies. Just think — Mike can have Wheaties for breakfast, stop by McDonald's for lunch and, after pulling on his Nike's and dribbling the old Wilson around during an afternoon workout, chill down with his Gatorade.

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AND ANOTHER THING: Denver forward Bill Hanzlik, who missed all of last season with back surgery, retired on August 7 and will be new Charlotte Hornets' coach Allan Bristow's assistant. Hanzlik, a former first-round pick by Seattle after his college career at Notre Dame, was traded to the Nuggets for David Thompson in 1982 and became one of the league's toughest defensive players, regardless of size . . . Speaking of the Hornets, Gene Little stepped down as head man because he felt he wasn't getting enough support from other team officials. He'll take over as Vice-President and special assistant to President Spencer Stolper. Littles' troubles came to a head when he wanted to pick Dikembe Mutumbo in the draft instead of eventual top pick Larry Johnson. That put Littles in direct conflict with both Bristow, team Vice-President and Player Personnel Director at the time, and Scouting Director Dave Twardzik. Something had to give . . . Former Dallas Mavericks (among others) coach John MacLeod — now at Notre Dame — is suing the Mavericks for a percentage of profits he claims are owed him from his 1987-89 stint in the Lone Star State. The Mavs contend the suit is without merit . . . Nine-year NBA veteran Ray Felix, the league's Rookie of the Year in 1953 when he averaged 17.6 ppg and 13.3 rpg for the Baltimore Bullets, died of a heart attack on July 28. The 6-11 center out of Long Island University, who also played with the Knicks and Lakers, averaged 10.9 ppg and 8.9 rpg during a solid career . . . A felony arrest warrant was issued for Indiana Pacers' forward Kenny Williams in Chesapeake, Va. on August 23 for passing bad checks. Williams "only" made $250,000 as a rookie last year . . . Mitchell Wiggins, 31, who was banned from the NBA for more than two years for cocaine use, quietly signed a one-year deal with the 76ers. Wiggins previously played for the Bulls and Rockets. He missed all of the 1986-87 and 1988-89 seasons, then sat out last year in a contract dispute.

Kevin Doyle is the Sports Editor of the Newburyport Daily News, in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Kevin is regularly assigned to cover the Boston Celtics.

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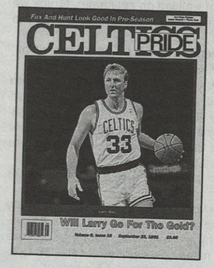

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Feeling Better Than Ever

Larry's Back Ailments May Finally Be Behind Him

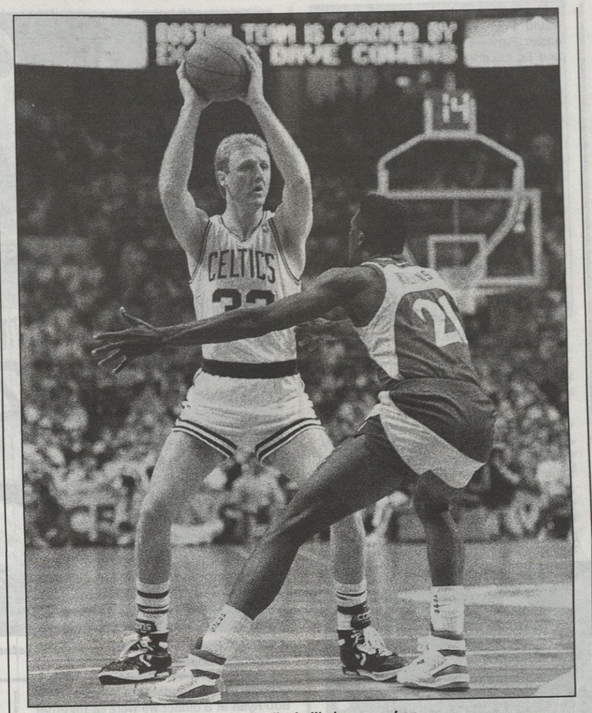
By Bob Schron

His agent, Bob Woolf, sensed Larry Bird was himself again in late July when Bird traveled to visit Woolf at his summer home on Cape Cod. For the first time in almost three years, Woolf thought, Larry Bird had a sense of optimism, a zest for his future as an athlete.

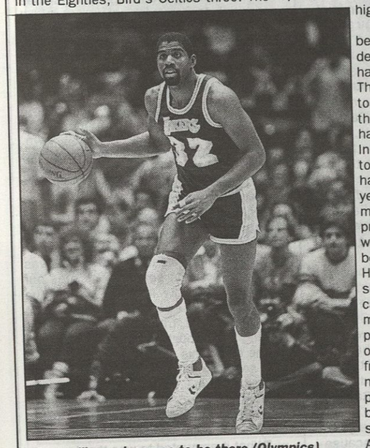
It's been four years, thinks Bob Ryan of The Boston Globe, since Bird has played the type of basketball which Magic Johnson calls "the way it (basketball) should be played." In November of 1987, Bird walked off the court in Richfield, Ohio during an early season game with the Cleveland Cavaliers. At the start of the 1987-88 year, he'd awed observers before the early exit in Cleveland with what was diagnosed as the beginning of the Achilles tendon problem.

"It was unforgettable," says Ryan, who co-authored Bird's autobiography, Drive. "Larry had averaged over thirty points a game, had worked himself into peak condition. Then, the injuries started to happen. He still had a great scoring season that year (29.9 ppg) but it wasn't the same. He was forcing things, he was clearly worried about his health."

There has perhaps never been a player who has meant as much to basketball as Larry Bird has. Magic Johnson and Bird entered the National Basketball Association together in 1979-80. That season, Johnson's Los Angeles Lakers won the title, the following season Bird's Celtics won. Both players, 6'9" and literal point forwards, possessed an advanced feel for the game, a unique versatility that gave them dual power. These men were able to star individually, able to post triple-double averages, Oscar Robertsonlike. They, however, also were able to totally commit teammates to a team passing game. Johnson's Lakers won five championships in the Eighties, Bird's Celtics three. The men are friends, competitors, athletes who have motivated each other to their highest potential.



As long as Larry is feeling fine physically, he'll play on and on.



Magic: "Larry deserves to be there (Olympics), especially after all he's done for the game."

For Bird, of course, there has been a tragic twist in his story, a devilish element, because injury has continued to plague his career. The Achilles tendon injury proved to be the start of a trend, rather than an aberration. In 1988, Bird had surgery on the Achilles tendons. In 1989-90, he struggled all season to regain his feel for the game, having missed the entire previous year. Last season proved to be the most misery-laden of all. His back problem forced him out at midyear, when arguably he was playing his best basketball in five seasons. He was a chancy proposition all season thereafter, a day-to-day case that was difficult to handle mentally. He played only eighty-five percent of the playoffs, and then only at fifty percent efficiency. He fractured his cheekbone in the final game of the first round of the playoffs. In June he submitted — back surgery was performed by a surgical team coordinated by Dr. Arnold Scheller. Would the rehabilitation succeed? Would Bird play again? Questions and doubts. Questions and doubts. They had trailed the great Bird for four years.

In mid-July, Bird reported substantial progress in his rehabilitation program; simultaneously, it was reported in USA Today, The Atlanta Constitution and The Boston Globe that contrary to his previous thoughts on the matter, Bird has indicated his interest in playing for the United States Olympic Team when the NBA enters the games for the first time in 1992. Bird has surprised Bob Woolf. At the Cape, he had been walking six miles a day, swimming effortlessly and moving freely. In this aura of well-being, Bird apparently reconsidered his original thoughts about Barcelona.

"I think he started to make up his mind in the beginning of July," said Woolf. "He was feeling great, and it was then he was officially notified about playing. He wasn't sure how he felt about it because he's said all along he didn't want to take a spot from a younger player, but he felt so positive about his condition, about the possibility of playing with Magic."

At the Celtics' rookie camp at the Red Auerbach Basketball School, Celtics' CEO Dave Gavitt, who is also head of the U.S. Basketball Committee, had been asked about the possibility of Bird's playing with the Olympic Team. At the time, publicly, Bird's stance hadn't changed. Gavitt at that time had not said anything, but his look spoke a thousand words. From the beginning of the Gavitt Era, the CEO has expressed nothing but the highest appreciation for the Bird artistry. Gavitt wants Bird on the team, his glance said it; according to sources, he's been hard at work behind the scenes, apparently trying to persuade Bird to join up. Woolf thought as well that Gavitt has been an influence on Bird's thinking.

The other significant person is Magic Johnson, who is openly politicking for Bird to play. From Maryland where he was playing an exhibition game, Magic told Steve Bulpett of The Boston Herald, "I've already told Larry he has to play. That's just the way it is.

"Larry's told me he wants it. In his heart, he really wants to play. But I think it's just a matter of how healthy he is.

"This is history, it's an opportunity of a lifetime. We'll never get this chance again."

Red Auerbach concurred with Johnson's thinking. To Auerbach, Bird's concept, that the game belongs to "young" players no longer applies. "They've changed the rules," Auerbach said.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing. Then he looks around when all of the other guys are playing — people like Magic, Michael Jordan, Charles Barkley — and he should go ahead and do it."

A subplot does exist in this, and that's the item concerning Bird's future with the team after the present season. Bird is in the fifth year of his contract, an important season for the man in terms of securing his financial future. Reportedly, Bird will receive over $7 million to play in 1991-92. It's a reason Woolf is beginning to become more visible in the local scene, although the agent denies this is an issue.

"It's one thing that shouldn't be misinterpreted," argues Woolf. "Larry is playing his final year here and playing in the Olympics (hypothetically) so he can go out on a flourish. As long as Larry is feeling fine physically, and can continue to earn every cent the Celtics pay him, he'll play on and on."

It's consistently been the situation with Bird, one of the sports industry's most important figures: never has there been a player who performed with such an impassioned commitment to the sport while cherishing the monetary rewards just as much. Now Bird is at a crossroads in many, many different respects; his rehabilitation is crucial, not just for basketball, but for his life. For the first time in perhaps ten years, he is finally relatively pain free in the back area. There is the matter of the Celtics, a team he's deeply committed to, his professional joy would be to win another title in Boston with men like Robert Parish and Kevin McHale. And now there is the Olympics. It's the theme of the "poor hick from French Lick" revived for another re-working. Who could have dreamed that Bird, the Hoosier from humble American origins, would win an Olympic Gold Medal?

Johnson summed Bird up now, circa 1991. "With Larry, he was feeling like, 'Man, well maybe I won't be the way I want to be,' You know, he wanted to be the Larry Bird that everyone knew before all of these things started happening. I told him, 'Look, you deserve to be there after all you've done for the game. If it wasn't for you, we would never have gotten this chance to play.' He has to play. He does."

The Big Three Will Stay Together

McHale's Contract Extension Solidifies C's Front Line

By Bob Schron

With the news that Kevin McHale, the dominant offensive player in the low post, has signed a contract extension through the 1992-93 season, the Celtics hypothetically will have their powerful frontline together at least until the end of that season. McHale, who starred last season while still having his minutes reduced to approximately twenty-nine minutes per game, had said during the season that if he came out of (the season) feeling "relatively healthy," he would continue to play. McHale missed virtually an entire month of the regular season in 1990-91 with a severe ankle injury, suffered in Seattle during the team's West Coast trip. It influenced his thinking about his future at the time. McHale's glibness has always been a necessary defense mechanism, an idiosyncratic shield to hide the genuine love he has for the game.

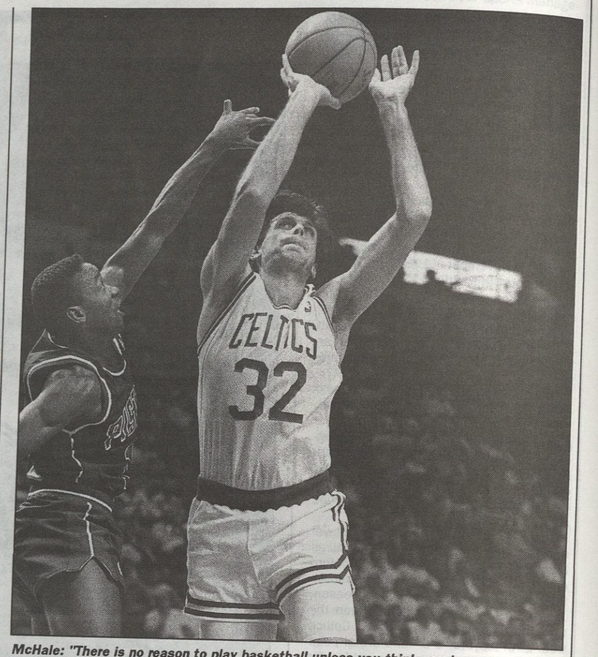
McHale could take anything in stride seemingly, throughout the years, whether it was a Bill Fitch practice, a losing streak, a controversy with Larry Bird, assorted minor injuries. Yet, in 1991, suddenly, though he had talked about the aging process in recent years, it was more than talk.

"The ankle injury was something that I couldn't just blow off," he said. "And we had people and technologies which you would think would have made healing easier. But it wasn't the case. Arnie Scheller and Ed Lacerte (Celtic team doctor and trainer respectively) worked daily on it, giving treatment. We were traveling on charter, which made time available for even more therapy. But the ankle just didn't respond that well.

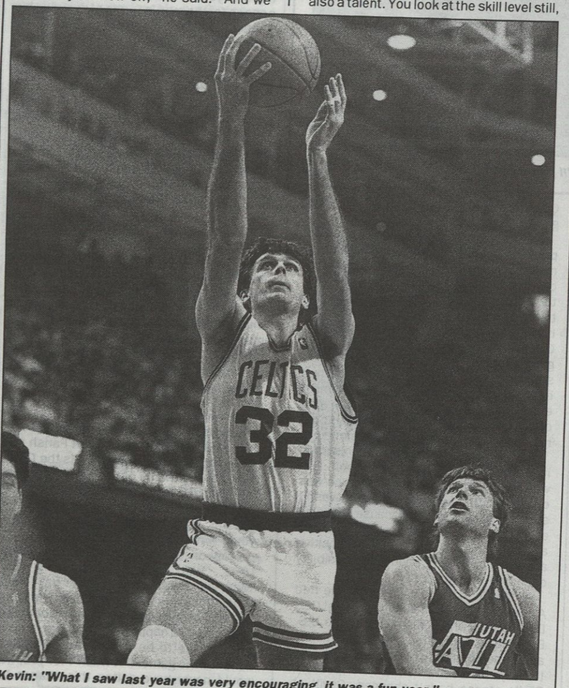
"It made coming back (the three more years) a real question suddenly. "I've never wanted to go through training camp. It's always been a grind. "I've heard myself say things over the years that maybe there really is a time to do something else with my life other than playing basketball. Then this summer there was more surgery, I've spent more summers on crutches, since I broke my foot in 1987, than I care to remember.

"But ultimately the final decision was that I still care about the game, still think it's fun. I've said this before, too; there is no reason to play basketball unless you think you have a chance to win a championship. No other reason to play.

"What I saw (in 1990-91) last season was very encouraging. It was a fun year, even with the injury, even seeing how much Larry had to go through. I went through something like that with the foot during the playoffs in 1987. The pain was ridiculous (sarcastic). But I also saw so many positive things. Dee Brown and Reggie Lewis are great young players, and Brian Shaw is also a talent. You look at the skill level still, of Robert Parish, and you're amazed. I told Bob Ryan at a dinner we were at together last year, that I've never seen Robert play as well as he had played last year. And I can't say enough about what Dave Gavitt has brought to the team. He's powerful and personable. He has the player up front in his thinking. As you get older, you appreciate that sort of thing more."



McHale: "There is no reason to play basketball unless you think you have a chance to win a championship."



Kevin: "What I saw last year was very encouraging, it was a fun year."

McHale, who spent most of the summer in Minnesota as always with his wife Lynn and three children, still had his annual golf tournament at Cape Code this summer, bringing in his friend, Charles Barkley, among others. "We're good friends," said McHale. "Charles is all excited about playing on the Olympic Team. He sees this as an important challenge in his career."

McHale thought the Celtics would again be a strong contender in the Eastern Conference this summer. "I never want to place any limits on how far we can go," he said.

Chris Ford had McHale playing backup center as well as the power forward position. In fact, a critical move for the team when they were at their peak in 1990-91 (29-5 to initiate the campaign) was in Ford's decision to play McHale in that role off the bench. This freed Larry Bird to play the power forward at the start and introduced the running skills of Kevin Gamble into the team's formula.

"But you have to be willing to adjust. Adjust and adapt," he added. "Because you just know what will happen. In the playoffs, Larry's iffy, Brian is in a slump, and Kevin (Gamble) isn't working out. I thought we picked up an invaluable contributor in Eddie Pinckney down the stretch. It's such a temperamental sport; I'd tell Eddie when he wasn't playing, 'Look, you have to continue working. Opportunities are tough to come by on this (Celtics') team, especially in the frontcourt.' It was a matter of adjusting, and Eddie's come through in a big way. I felt good for him because he's a class act. It's one of the genuine good things about a team sport."

Ford, at the team's rookie camp in late July, praised McHale's career, understandably. "He's a winner. Put that down. The great thing about Kevin, and Larry (and Robert Parish and Reggie Lewis) are that these guys understand what work needs to be done to achieve a championship. Kevin's totally reliable in important situations. That's why he's among the best in the game."

McHale was pleased that Ford was named coach last season. "He runs our butts off," McHale laughed. "Doc.", he paused, using the coach's nickname. "But the truth of it is, Chris understands what veterans go through, because he struggled at the end of his career himself. It just is not easy sometimes, because, as one example, some nights the 'legs' aren't what you'd like. But in all, the effort is worth it, the investment is worth it physically.

"What it amounted to was that I wasn't ready to retire yet. It was right to continue playing."

Given Another Chance

Anderson Hunt Relishes Chance To Play With Celts

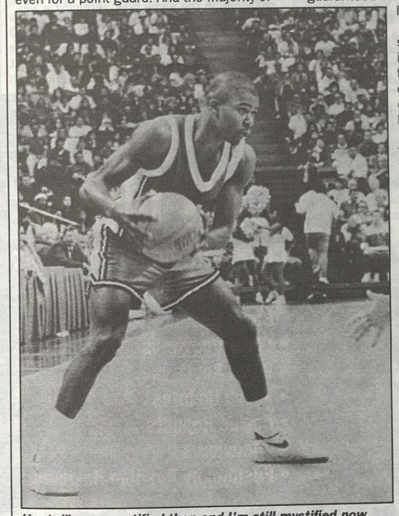
By Mike Spellman

Naturally, Anderson Hunt's damaged psyche received some much needed positive re-enforcement when the Celtics collective braintrust, not wishing to run the risk of losing the rights to retain his services, agreed to sign him to a one year partially guaranteed contract. Nevertheless, however, it seems safe to conclude that it will still be some time before the speedy sharpshooter gets over the fact that he was not one of the 54 players selected in this year's NBA draft.

"I was mystified then and I'm still mystified now that I wasn't drafted," said Hunt, Nevada-Las Vegas' second leading scorer the last two years (15.9 and 17.2 ppg, respectively) behind this year's top draft choice Larry Johnson, yet the only one of the team's five starters who wasn't drafted. "I felt terrible while it was happening, although I felt very good for my teammates. As it got later and later in the draft I kept saying to myself "What is going on here?"

What was going on there — while Hunt sat dying and watching as his college mates Johnson, Stacy Augmon (ninth), Greg Anthony (12th) and George Ackles (29th) were selected — at draft headquarters around the country on June 27, was a pervasive perception that Hunt, coming out of school after his junior year, was not yet ready for the NBA and may, in fact, never be. There are apparently a number of reasons for this widely accepted belief.

By far, however, the most damaging of these was that he is seen as a shooting guard in a point guard's body. Though the UNLV programs listed him at 6'2 — 175, an in person sighting reveals the truth to be more like 6'0 — 160, on the small side even for a point guard. And the majority of scouting reports support the contention that he simply does not possess the mindset to ever become an NBA point guard.



Hunt: "I was mystified then and I'm still mystified now that I wasn't drafted."

Not surprisingly, the subject of this damning critique does not fail to capitalize on the opportunity to offer forth vehement countertalk.

"We played to our strengths (at UNLV) — Greg (Anthony) played the point and I was the shooter on offense, but that doesn't mean I can't play the point too," Hunt asserts. "I guess I just got a bad rap, but I'm not second guessing myself."

Although, all things considered, it helped Hunt immeasurably to have a point guard of Anthony's caliber flanking him in the backcourt for the last three years, many feel now that it cost him dearly in terms of his overall development.

For now, though, the Celtics brass does not appear to be nearly as concerned with what he can't yet do as what he can.

"Anderson is an intriguing player for a couple of reasons," observed team CEO Dave Gavitt. "He does a few things this team needs. For one, he plays defense and he's a quick point guard like Michael Williams of Indiana. He can penetrate and he moves his feet well. Second, he's a very good shooter with a pure stroke and we need that type of shooter."

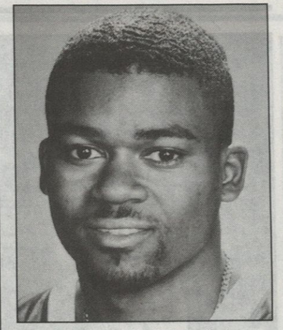
Hunt has said that he would have been a lot happier if he just could have been drafted, even as the 54th player selected. However, count Gavitt among those who feels that Hunt is probably better off now than a lot of those players who were chosen late.

"It may have been a blow to his ego, but he had the advantage of being able to pick and choose a team," observed the man in charge of basketball operations for the Celtics. "He could have been taken say 49th by a team with five or six guards with guaranteed contracts and no real spot for him."

Indeed, judging by the position he now finds himself in, even Hunt must admit that it's getting pretty difficult to remain disconsolate over his draft night snubbing.

"Right now, I have to say that I feel pretty good about the way things have turned out for me," said Hunt. "I definitely feel good about being picked by a team like the Celtics. This is a team that has a shot at the championship every year, and that means a lot to me."

Fortunately, Hunt is smart enough to know that the partially guaranteed contract he was rewarded with for his standout play at the Celtics' rookie/free agent camp and in the Los Angeles Summer League will mean almost nothing once training camp begins next month. With only 12 roster spots available, there are 13 players holding guaranteed contracts and a host of promising free agents (Derek Smith, Stevie Thompson and Reggie Hanson, to name just a few) standing between Hunt and the start of his career in a Celtics uniform.



Anderson: "I've felt all along that Boston was my best shot."

Because of the new dimensions he has the potential to provide the team with, management would appear committed to finding a way to open up a slot for Hunt should he show enough in training camp. Bottom line: it's all up to him to make or break his future with the Celtics. Listening to the former Runnin' Rebel speak, however, it would seem that there's no other way he'd like to have it.

"I've felt all along that Boston was my best shot, and that's what I was concentrating on," said Hunt, who also received free agent camp invites from Washington and San Antonio. "I know I'm going to have to work hard to make this team, but I'm confident that I can and I really do think I can help them."

In addition to the Celtics, Bullets and Spurs, one other team that had a strong interest in Hunt was his home town Detroit Pistons. In fact, according to Hunt, Pistons Head Coach Chuck Daly informed him just prior to the draft that, if he were still available when their choice in the 40th spot rolled around, he'd be coming back to his old stomping ground. However, when it came time to choose, Detroit opted for Lasalle's Doug Overton, a versatile 6-3 guard who at one time had appeared a lock for the first round.

"After the Detroit pick, I knew something was wrong," confessed Hunt. "I don't know what happened. It's still a puzzle to me."

A lot of basketball people, including UNLV Head Coach Jerry Tarkanian and NBA Scouting Director Marty Blake, have gone on record saying Hunt should have stuck around for his senior year in order to, among other things, hone his point guard skills. Tarkanian told his shooting guard that, unless he was drafted in the first round and received a fully guaranteed contract, he was making a mistake coming out early.

Despite the way things turned out, however, Hunt does not regret his decision to turn pro.

"This was one of the two or three times Coach Tark and I disagreed," Hunt admits. "I want to make it in the NBA if possible. But if I can't make it here, I'll go overseas or to the CBA. It really doesn't matter where. If you love basketball you'll go anywhere just to play."

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Red On Roundball

Bird Really Keyed The Development Of The NBA

By Red Auerbach

I think the ballclub could not have received any better news this summer than if we had struck gold. I don't need to repeat platitudes concerning Larry Bird. People who know anything about the game understand what he brings to a team. In his twelve seasons with the Celtics, he's arguably been the most important player in the history of the franchise. Bill Russell, of course, is the one who is as important to the franchise. Russell was responsible for Bob Cousy (and Walter Brown, and me) to finally overcome endless years of frustration to start winning championships. This was 1957. Who would think there would be fifteen more championship flags?

Obviously when you consider Larry's value, and make the argument he's the most valuable, what's considered is more than sport. It's economics. Larry Bird not only transformed a franchise that had a desultory losing mark of 29-53 and was the central force who turned it into a championship team in two years, he was the player the team — and the whole National Basketball Association — utilized to transform basketball into the most popular spectator and participatory sport of the last decade of this century. The implications are stunning. Bird and Magic Johnson (and now Michael Jordan) really keyed this development for basketball.

All of this is off of my point, which is that this summer I've been hearing nothing but good news about Larry's neck, which was operated on in early June. He hasn't felt this good in years, so I immediately interpret this as a positive sign for our team.

I have to go back a few summers ago, when my annual summer camp was at Brandeis University and the team held its rookie camp there. Larry had been out literally the entire 1988-89 season with Achilles tendon problems and he'd been anxious to begin working out. So he came in with the rookies, and immediately, he fell on his back. It was a thunderous fall, it was a fractured vertebra. I remember that there was an immediate wave of panic, that Larry would be out for that season, perhaps (he would play eighty games, in fact). But I approached him in the training room after the accident and he immediately placed my mind at ease. He looked me in the eye and said, "Red, it's not that bad. I'll play this year, and I'll be in camp to start the season." He was, and he's always had that attitude, something we've built our program around.

Larry hasn't felt this good in years, a positive sign for our team.

I reiterate what I stated during the heat of the championship playoffs last spring: If we're healthy, we're as talented as anyone, and teams don't want any part of us. Larry's a key of course, but as time has gone on, we have other keys, too, men such as Parish and McHale, and young stars such as Lewis and Dee Brown. The game has once again become Celtic-like, featuring mobility and the transition game. Chicago won the championship last spring because of Michael Jordan, because of defense, but also because they ran. I read recently comments by Isiah Thomas saying that the Bulls won because of the defense they picked up in the years and years they were defeated by the Pistons in the playoffs. This may be so, but the Pistons picked up winning savvy from the Celtics in the 1980's (something Isiah acknowledges). I believe we're serious contenders for the title this season. But in the early pre-season, I think it's useful to look at some of the other clubs in the league to see what they've done as well.

THE DRAFT. I thought the first three picks in the draft, Larry Johnson to Charlotte, Kenny Anderson to the Nets and Billy Owens to the Kings were clear-cut. When Denver was able to draft Dikembe Mutombo at center, they took an important stride toward creating a defense. I though all along that if a team had a chance to take players who could immediately turn around a critical area of their team — defense — the player should be chosen. Mutombo is such a player. Stacey Augmon is another player like that, a player I greatly admire. I think Atlanta becomes a different, stronger team defensively with people like Augmon; and with Doc Rivers traded to the Clippers, Rumeal Robinson gets more playing time, and he's got great potential.

I thought the two guards Mark Macon (to Denver) and Greg Anthony (New York) were fine players. I was surprised that the Knicks were able to get him that low (12th pick in the draft).

NEW YORK. The Knicks are our natural (regional) and historical rival. We're always watching them. They made a few key moves this summer; first, they have a new coach in Pat Riley. He has his work cut out for him, specifically because of the uncertainty surrounding Patrick Ewing's status. There are a number of unknowns there that I'm not privy to. But, there is a problem when a player who is an important part of your program has so much publicity surrounding his motives. I know they've tried to appease Patrick, who's a great center, and who is an impact player. This was not the way Riley wanted to start his career there.

THE CONTENDERS. I think we're there; I also believe that Chicago, Portland, Los Angeles, and Detroit are at this level. I will always regard a team with a dominate center as a potential title contender, and Houston has that type in Hakeem Olajuwon. Don Chaney did a very smart thing last season; when Olajuwon came back from his facial injury, the Rockets pulled together and made a serious run at the Midwest Division lead. So Chaney brought Olajuwon back slowly, bringing him in off the bench to start. It helped the team last season and it has promoted a positive feeling about the program as a whole there. The Rockets are also very high on their draft choice, John Turner, who played in Europe. I pulled John aside at the tryout camps and offered him encouragement because he's a young player who has a world of potential. He's certainly in a good place to develop it.

I think the Bulls have a solid club, and by reaching agreement with Scottie Pippen on a contract, they've made their summer more pleasant. The Lakers had a great season last year, and Anthony Jones could help them. It's impossible to say how much James Worthy's injury cost them in The Finals last season. He wasn't running as well as he had in the past, even before that ankle problem. It was interesting; Danny Ainge worried about Portland's "cockiness," which in the right situation, is a plus. But Portland couldn't sustain its drive last year, when it appeared they were the team to win the West. I've talked to some people who are familiar with the situation and it's been a trying summer for those players. I have to believe they'll be good again.

The Pistons, of all the contenders, have made the most dramatic changes. There are questions there. You don't know how much the difficult, very difficult job of coaching the Olympic Team will cost Chuck Daly. There's a question of how the team will respond to the loss of the low post threat of James Edwards. Will Orlando Woolridge fit in? How will Mark Aguirre adjust to another scorer type? What is John Salley's status? It's the most difficult challenge in the game now; retaining a winning chemistry over an extended amount of time is nearly impossible because of contract obligations, egos, and phasing out players who have either become a little too old, or have a problem with their role.

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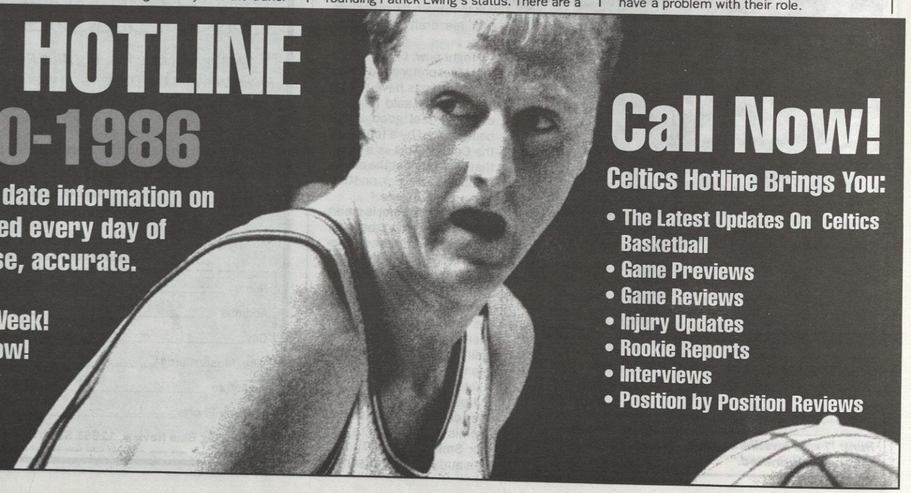

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Innerview

The Globe's Jackie MacMullan Feels The Team Must Stay Healthy

By Bob Schron

When it comes to knowing the inside story on the Celtics, no one is better informed than the Globe's Jackie MacMullan.

Although she has been working the beat for a decade, Jackie has just recently become known outside of New England for her appearances on ESPN as a guest commentator.

Now, Jackie appears as a guest of Celtics Pride.

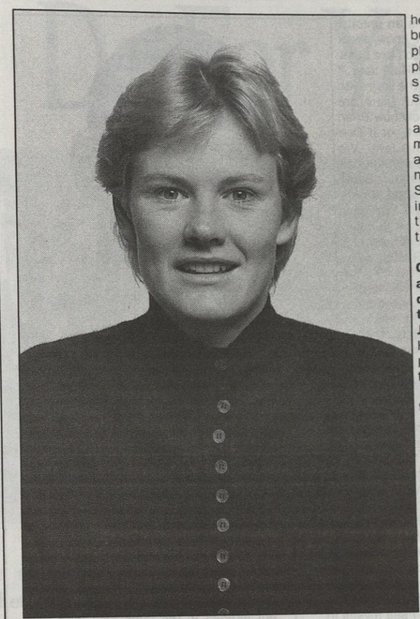
CELTICS PRIDE: It seems that the big question after every season is, Can the Big Three hang on for another season? Well, can they do it next year?

JACKIE MacMULLAN: Yes and no. They have it in them to make the Celtics competitive again this year, but the problem with the Celtics as long as these three guys are around is, Can these guys stay healthy?

It is unrealistic to expect all three of them to remain healthy over an 82 game schedule. It's just too gruelling, and even young legs can't do it anymore.

You've got Larry coming off back surgery, Kevin coming off ankle surgery and Robert does a pretty good job at taking care of himself, but at the end of the season he's in street clothes for the last few games.

If they could somehow stay healthy throughout the whole season, there's no reason to think this team can't contend. But if they don't, then they just don't have the front court help to keep them at that level.



MacMullan: "If they could somehow stay healthy, there's no reason this team can't contend."

CP: From what you just said, it would seem that last year is what we could expect for the coming season, with the Celtics getting off to a fast start and then slipping once the injuries come.

JM: To a tee. The nice thing is, the longer the old guys can hang on, the young guys are catching up in experience.

I think you saw the inexperience of the back court in the Detroit series, and to a lesser extent in the Indiana series. But when you look at it, Brian Shaw was only in his second year in the league, Gamble was really only in his first season at small forward, and Dee Brown was in his rookie season. So there's a lot of inexperience in the Celtics' back court.

CP: Shaw, in particular, took a lot of heat last year. Did people forget that he was in just his second NBA season, or is he maybe not the player people thought he was?

JM: I think the talk about getting this kid out of here was kind of ridiculous. It was only his second year, and of course he was going to make mistakes.

Everyone talks about his first playoffs and what he did against Detroit three years ago, but that's easy when you're a rookie and no one expects you to do anything.

I'm not going to judge Brian Shaw based on what he did in the playoffs last year; I'm going to judge him based on what he does this season: How does he come back? How does he respond to the pressure? That's what I'll be interested to see.

CP: It's a different situation for Shaw also because now he has Dee Brown pushing him at point guard. How do you view that situation?

JM: I think it's great. It's healthy for both of them, and there's certainly enough room on the team for both of them.

That was the funniest thing of all about last year - people trying to make a controversy out of it. I think it was Reggie Lewis who pointed out that part of what made Dee Brown so good was Brian Shaw, and part of what made Brian Shaw so good was Dee Brown. They're really kind of intertwined at this point and you can't put one against the other. It just doesn't work that way.

CP: How about Kevin Gamble. Is it reasonable to expect him to turn in another season like he did last year?

JM: He's another one you have to be interested to see how he responds. He had an inactive post season and wasn't really involved. How will he respond this year?

I thought he made so many little contributions that were important last year, aside from his scoring. This will be a big year for him, seeing how he comes back.

CP: Given the emotional makeup of Larry Bird, what do you expect from him coming off back surgery, having people say he might be done?

JM: I think the fact that he's talking about playing in the Olympics tells you that he's feeling terrific.

Everything with Larry depends on how he's feeling physically, but he's not the type of player that relies on physical gifts - he's a smart player, an instinctive player.

If he can't jump quite as high, it really doesn't matter. If he can't run as fast, well, he was never that fast anyway. So much of his game is instinct and thinking, I think we'll see a lot of that from him this year.

CP: Have you ever seen anything like what he did in the playoffs with that bad back?

JM: It defied all odds. He doesn't have to prove to anyone how tough he is.

Aside from that, though, I thought he did a good job last year at adjusting to his new role on the team. He is no longer the primary option all the time, and I'm sure that was not an easy thing for him to adjust to. He did a good job at doing that, though, getting Reggie Lewis more involved and keeping Kevin involved.

Larry can be the most valuable player on the team every year if he realizes that he is not the first option every time down the floor, and I think he has realized that.

CP: What do you think about the Celtics' drafting of Rick Fox in the first round?

JM: I think Rick Fox is a very nice pick, but I thought the Celtics made a mistake in trying to ballyhoo him as the next Reggie Lewis or Dee Brown. That's not fair to a 24th pick.

He has some problems defensively from what I've seen, but they're problems that are correctable. That's what the Celtics are going to need him to be - a defensive stopper, and he seems like a very bright and willing kid, so let's see what he can do.

CP: In your opinion, can the Celtics stay near the top over the next few years without having to drop near the bottom so they can get a good draft pick?

JM: The one thing they are missing is that one player who bridges the young players with the older players. You get tired of hearing it, but that bridge would have been Len Bias.

That is the one thing the team is still missing, and I think it hurts them at times because you have all these veterans, and then you have all these guys who are just a little too young. It would be nice if they had a player in there who would bridge them - Eddie Pinckney is the right age, but not the right temperament.

CP: After such a sensational rookie year as head coach, is the sophomore campaign going to be tougher for Chris Ford, what with the veterans getting a bit longer on the tooth?

JM: I suppose so, but I think the one thing he established last year was the respect of the young players and the old players. As long as he can keep that respect, then I don't think he'll have any problems. That's the most important thing in this day and age - the players have to respect your knowledge, and the rest takes care of itself.

CP: Speaking of Larry and the Olympics, what do you think about the United States sending its professionals over there?

JM: I don't know why everyone gets so upset about it - why shouldn't we send our best players over there?

The argument I always hear is, "It's such a nice thing for the college kids. Let the amateurs play." Well, the first thing is, the Olympics haven't been an amateur event for 20-some odd years. Secondly, why should Larry Bird or Magic Johnson be punished because they went to college in the wrong year? Or just because Charles Barkley wasn't Bob Knight's cup of tea, now that he's one of the great players in the world, why should he miss out on that opportunity?

CP: How do you like your little side career as a television commentator?

JM: It's kind of fun. Sometimes it's a little depressing, though, because you can write for 10 years and no one ever says anything to you. You go on television once, and suddenly everyone knows who you are.

It's a lot of fun, but you wish people would appreciate writing as much as they seem to appreciate television.

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Confidential

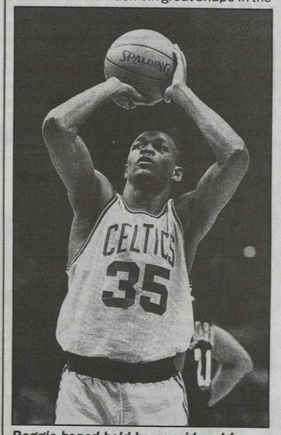
Gearing Up For Pre-Season Camp

By Bob Schron

With the end of summer, the Celtics began gearing up for the start of the team's Pre-Season camp. The Celtics organization was pleased with the team's play in the Los Angeles Summer League, that competition coming off the rookie camp at the Red Auerbach Basketball School at Babson College. The entire process is one of narrowing down sizable numbers of players to improve the team in specific areas. For example, this summer the team has been trying to address one of its most pressing needs — consistency in hitting the open shot on the perimeter. This was the reason the team was interested in Anderson Hunt, the early entry free agent from University of Nevada at Las Vegas. According to the team's national scout, Rick Weitzman, and the regional head, Don Mead, Hunt did more than was expected.

Mead developed an instant respect for Hunt's all-around game, especially his defense. Weitzman talked about Hunts' athleticism and the way that he validated voluminous press clippings about his shooting.

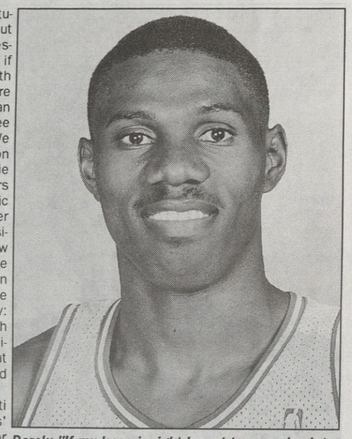
"Jerry Tarkanian (UNLV coach) does a masterful job at playing to his athletes' strengths, so its' difficult to get an accurate reading of an individual coming out to that school. I think Anderson did an excellent job shooting the ball, We had questions about his interior defense but overall he showed that his strengths outnumber his weaknesses. He has a real chance. I also was pleasantly surprised by the play of Rick Fox. He wasn't in great shape in the



Reggie hoped he'd be considered for the Olympic team.

rookie camp but he was impressive with his court awareness, his passing, and his attitude. I think both of the kids are potential players."

Weitzman is one of the brass who thinks that the Celtics are, in general, a better team heading into the start of camp early next month. "There is the undeniable question of health. It's an unfortunate reality: We don't know about Larry Bird's back. We do have questions about Kevin McHale and if Derek Smith will be on the team with his knee problems. But there are positives we didn't know how Brian Shaw would come back, or if Dee Brown could play at this level. We hadn't had much of a contribution from either Kevin Gamble or Eddie Pickney. These are all solid players for us right now. Stojko Vrankovic played very well in the LA Summer League, and he's yet another positive factor. Weitzman, taking a few weeks off now before beginning the coast-to-coast scouting regimen in the colleges, summed up the more appealing numbers factor this way: "With better players available at each spot, it makes for a more competitive camp. That helps the team, that helps the players play harder. And better."



Derek: "If my knee is right I want to come back to Boston, and play."

NOTES: D. Smith was in Cincinnati last week at agent Ron Grinkers' (Smith's agent) informal camp for some of his players; Smith, who reported his knee was improved, felt that rest in Grinkers' Cincinnati camp with Danny Manning, the Celtics' Gamble, Brad Lohaus and others would be very informative. "If my knee is right, I want to come back to Boston, and play," he told Jackie MacMullan in The Boston Globe. "I don't want to play only ten minutes, though, I think I can come in and contribute 18-20 minutes. That's the role I see myself in."

Celtics' CEO Dave Gavitt was in Scotland last week completing a golfing vacation...Gavitt, in an interview in The Boston Herald, expressed a continued confidence in Brian Shaw, arguing that there were still certain (press) positions which hadn't "forgiven" Shaw for playing in the 1989-90 season in Italy. This, Gavitt felt, was a reason there was so much speculation concerning a possible Shaw trade immediately after the playoffs last spring, when Shaw, perhaps tired, perhaps still favoring a sprained ankle, struggled. "Brian's problem with us when he played in Italy are so far behind us now that it isn't even worth discussing. But when he didn't have a good playoff, I think it fell on others in the league that, 'Hey, maybe we'll be able to steal this guy.' But you won't steal Brian Shaw."

Kevin Gamble had begun negotiations in the press in mid-month, hoping that negotiations for a contract would not last as long as last season when he was signed on the eve of the opening of camp. Chris Ford in his column elsewhere in this issue, talked of Gamble's need to improve in his offense in the halfcourt, as well as his defense. As well, Gamble struggled in the playoffs when the team had problems matching up defensively with the taller frontcourt of Detroit. Gamble's bargaining stance is to ask the team consider to the whole season, when the small forward made a significant contribution to a very positive year under Ford. "I don't feel I did any thing wrong in the playoffs. I played well with what I had. I just would like to be paid what I'm worth, with the season I had as a starter. I don't think it's equitable to compare me to other small forwards in the league because my role on the Celtics makes our situations different. I'm more of a guard/forward instead of just a forward. That's why I was able to help the running game."...Reggie Lewis had hoped that he might be considered for a spot on the Olympic Team but with Larry Bird's apparent interest in the team now, and from published reports that excluded others including Isiah Thomas and Joe Dumars, the very good Lewis doesn't appear a likely choice. "The Olympics is something I've always dreamed about. When I heard that Michael Jordan or Larry might not play, then I figured there might have been an opportunity. I never had a chance to try out when I was in college, I was hoping my performance in the NBA might earn me an opportunity." Lewis wasn't subscribing to the theory that since he's but 25 years old, he'd have an opportunity again in 1996, whereas players like Bird and Magic Johnson (ages 34 and 32 respectively) for example, would have to play now. "I don't really like to hear that," Lewis commented. "Wait for my turn. But will it ever be my turn? If I've worked hard enough to do the right things, and I've produced right now, then I don't think someone else should be selected over me just because they've played longer. I'm not comparing myself to Magic or Larry. But if I'm good enough and I have the votes, why shouldn't I be allowed to be picked?" Two sources told MacMullan that Lewis was in contention, as one of the top six players at the swing position.

Eddie Pinckney, despite turning in the best play of his professional career to close out the playoffs last season, remained skeptical about his place in Ford's rotation. "I was pleased about my performance, but it doesn't mean that much in the pre-season. I really don't get the feeling I've accomplished anything." Ford, who really won't be satisfied until the organization's 17th championship flag is in the rafters, nevertheless differed with Pinckney's perception. He was extremely positive about Pinckney's performance in the latter stages of last season. Gavitt concurred: "What Pinckney did last year was show that if a player is determined enough to work hard, he can significantly improve his role on a basketball team."...Celtic-owned WEEI-Radio, the team's Flagship station, became all-sports format beginning September 3rd...One of those featured in the daily format, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. was Celtics play-by-play voice, Glenn Ordway who will team with former Celtic Jerry Sichting on the team's broadcasts this season...According to a report in MacMullan's column, McHale C's GM Jan Volk thought McHale was passed over in the consideration for the Olympic Team because of the priority given to zones, as well as the trapezoidal shaped lane, which fans out down low, where McHale has dominated throughout his career.

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Trying To Fulfill A Dream

Long Shots State Their Case At Summer Camp

By Mike Spellman

It should in no way be considered a reflection on the level of talent at this year's Celtics' annual rookie/free agent camp that only one newcomer — undrafted rookie Anderson Hunt out of UNLV — emerged with anything even close to a viable shot at making the team.

"This was my ninth NBA camp and by far this was the best as far as the overall talent went," raved Assistant Coach Jon Jennings, a former Scout for the Pacers and Video Coordinator for the C's before his promotion to the front lines last year. "Breaking down who we were going to take to the L.A. Summer League was an extremely difficult decision."

"Our scouts really did a good job to get the talent here," Head Coach Chris Ford concurred.

Echoed team CEO Dave Gavitt, "The general level of talent here was much better this year than last year."

Although management has not yet announced the list of invitees who'll join the veterans at training camp in October, there are a number of players who have certainly earned the right to at least shed sweat alongside the likes of Messieurs Bird, Parish, McHale, et al up until the regular season cut down.

Based on their performances at the rookie/free agent camp and in the Los Angeles Summer League, the list of candidates after Hunt, who has already signed a partially guaranteed contract, for a shot (albeit a long one) at the roster appears to be headed by former Syracuse star Stevie Thompson, veteran journeyman Pete Myers, and undrafted rookies Joe Anderson, out of St. Francis (Pa.), Kentucky's Reggie Hanson and Wisconsin's Patrick Tompkins.

These six hopefuls represented the Celtics in L.A., along with Boston returnees Brian Shaw, Joe Kleine, Stojko Vrankovic and Dave Popson, first round draft pick Rick Fox and free agent guards John Crotty, Stephen Bardo and Jean Derouillere.

However, though Hunt, Thompson, Myers, Anderson, Hanson and Tompkins have each earned favorable reviews from the coaching staff for their play to date, the problem they are now each up against is mathematical in nature.

Once Kevin Gamble re-ups, he will become the 13th Celtic with a guaranteed contract—joining Larry Bird, Kevin McHale, Robert Parish, Joe Kleine, Stojko Vrankovic, Eddie Pinckney, Michael Smith, Rick Fox, Reggie Lewis, Brian Shaw, Dee Brown and John Bagley. In addition, management is still contemplating re-signing veteran tough guy Derek Smith.

Toss in Hunt and that's 15 players with a leg up on the free agents, with, as we all know, only 12 roster spots to go around. And, while this should at the very least prove a disconcerting proposition for not only the newcomers but also the veterans on the fringe, the team's talent evaluators couldn't be more pleased over the prospects for training camp.

"The competition you can create in the off-season, the better," assessed Gavitt. "A situation like this pushes the people who are under contract to work hard to be ready. And, if someone in the camp jumps out and looks like he might be better than the people we have, then we'll start making a move to create an opportunity for him."

Gavitt: "The general level of talent here was much better this year than last year."

Prior to the Summer's activities, the only five Celtics really secure with their standing on the team for the upcoming season were Bird, McHale, Parish, Lewis and Brown (though this did not dissuade the latter two from putting in daily appearances at rookie/free agent camp). However, considering the amount of time that has now elapsed without a move, it also seems pretty safe to presume that neither Shaw, Gamble (once he signs), Pinckney nor Fox have much to worry about, at least so far as a change of address is concerned, anyway.

Hence, providing the preceding observations are correct, this then leaves Michael Smith, Kleine, Vrankovic and Bagley to fend off the challenges of Hunt, Derek Smith (when and if he's physically fit) and the rest of the hungry NBA wannabees for the remaining three roster spots.

Certainly, there aren't many who follow this team even casually who have not become aware over the last few months of management's desire to add to this year's team, 1) a defensive minded small forward, 2) an athletic power forward, 3) a long range threat for the backcourt, and 4) a fleet footed number three point guard.

Ostensibly, Fox would seem to fill the first hole, while Hunt appears reasonably capable of filling the latter two needs.

Going into training camp, however, the search for an athletic power forward continues. In the hopes of possibly landing one the easy way, the Celtics scouts extended invites for rookie/free agent camp to lauded draft day rejects Perry Carter, Cedric Lewis, Jerome Coles and Melvin Cheatum. Unfortunately, the first three were convincingly outplayed by smaller frontcourtmen Tompkins and Hanson, while Cheatum, easily the most highly regarded basketball talent in this group, injured his wrist in the 76ers camp and was not available in time for the Celtics camp.

Tompkins, who came out of nowhere in his Senior year to lead the Big 10 in rebounding and become Wisconsin's first All-Conference Team selection since 1968, is a Charles Barkley type of widebody (6-5, 245 pounds) with the same kind of strength, athleticism and Physics defying quickness and leaping ability as 'The Tub', but with no where near the overall skills and polish. Unfortunately, he followed up an excellent rookie/free agent camp, where he simply overwhelmed his aforementioned taller rivals with brutish physicality, with a disappointing showing in LA, averaging only 4.5 points and less than three rebounds in 18.3 minutes per game.

Hanson, though he was used primarily at center and power forward by Rick Pitino at Kentucky, seems destined to see most of his time in the pro ranks at small forward, given his athleticism (very good speed, quickness and rise), height (6-7) and weight (a little too lean 195 pounds). He displayed some impressive flashes in LA on his way to netting respectable averages of 10.3 points and 4.2 rebounds in 23.5 minutes per game, and he was one of the few Celtics entries to shoot better than 50 percent from the floor (24-for-43). Overall, however, he was irksomely inconsistent and his penchant for foul trouble (one foul per every 6.4 minutes he was on the floor) was a continuing source of annoyance for the Celtics coaches.

Then, of course, there were the standouts who are not so easily pigeonholed into slots on the Celtics' wish list — such as Stevie Thompson, Pete Myers and Joe Anderson — yet who nonetheless seem destined to make the ultimate choices management must face that much more difficult.

Clearly, the Boston brass is intrigued by Thompson, a real oddity by most organized hoop standards — a guy under 6'3 (ignore that 6'4 nonsense) who does his damage at the offensive end almost exclusively from inside 10 feet. Though no one can say with certainty exactly why the former Orangeman never developed anything resembling a functional jump shot, most experts agree that, ironically, it must relate at least partially to the phenomenal physical attributes and general fearlessness which have enabled him to excel at every previous level by simply taking it in strong.

"From 10 feet and in, I'm not sure there's anyone in the league better at finishing," lavished Gavitt, after watching Thompson's relentless high flying assault for four days of double sessions at the team's rookie/free agent camp. "People keep saying he can't play, but he's put up pretty good numbers at every level. Plus, he plays great defense and he's an excellent athlete."

Considering what he's done since the Celtic's camp broke up, it would seem pretty safe to presume that Thompson, if anything, has only improved his standing in the eyes of Gavitt and the coaching staff. Through the six games in the L.A. League, he was the Boston entry's leading point getter with a grand total of 114 (19 per), while playing an average of 26.3 minutes. He also collected more than five rebounds (with 17 of the 31 coming off of the offensive boards) and three assists per contest.

Then there's Myers, a prototype basketball journeyman. Since making the Bulls as a long shot sixth round choice out of Arkansas-Little Rock in 1986, the versatile 6'6 swingman has played for teams in Spain, Italy, the CBA and five different NBA locales. As one might be able to discern from this information alone, Myers is a guy who excels in no particular area, but does enough things well to draw a good amount of interest. Though he is no better than an average shooter and often has trouble finishing off his drives, his size, ability to handle small forward or either guard position, and his prize winning enthusiasm for the game have opened a lot of doors for him.

Not surprisingly, after doing enough things right at the Celtics camp to earn a further look, Myers went about his business without much fanfare in L.A., but quietly managed to come away with decent stats — 8.8 points (on 19-for-38 shooting) and 3.3 assists in just under 24 minutes per game.

Anderson, another swingman with no apparent natural position, opened some eyes at rookie camp with his impressive array of offensive skills. He then picked up quickly where he left off in L.A., averaging 11.7 points (on 16-for-30 shooting) in 17 minutes through the first three games. However, he tailed off in the final three contests, scoring a total of just eight points (3-for-14 from the floor) in 39 minutes. Last word, though, was that the coaches were pleased with both his shooting and scoring touch, as well as his poise and defense.

Of course, after the fact of the 14 contracts, the biggest handicap each of these five guys is up against is their 'tweener' designation, a status they unfortunately share with guaranteed roster spot recipients Lewis, Gamble, Shaw and Fox. Almost needless to say, for any of these young men to come under even tentative consideration for a Celtics uniform they would have to convincingly outplay several of the contract holders at training camp.

NBA Notebook

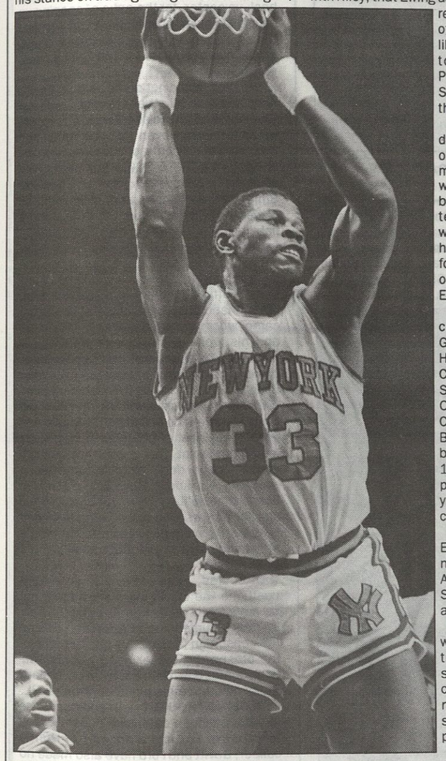
This Will Be A Tough Deal To Pull Off

By Andy Roth

The following article reflects the opinion of an independent writer who writes for several publications and are in no way the views of the *Boston Celtics* or *Celtics Pride*.

You had the feeling Patrick Ewing's days in New York were numbered, when he took the Knicks to arbitration seeking restricted free agency. When Ewing lost the case, and the Knicks took a 6 year, $33 million offer off the table, it was no surprise that the franchise center eventually gave new coach Pat Riley a list of seven teams he'd like to be traded to.

This was a request, not a demand. But it was enough for Knicks' President Dave Checketts to take a 180 degree turn toward his stance on trading Ewing. After standing firm for four months that New York wanted to build around their 7-footer, Checketts announced that he would "actively explore the possibility of trading Patrick Ewing."



Will Patrick be in New York at the start of the regular season?

Although the Knicks are ready to entertain offers, there is still a good chance Ewing will remain in New York. But the fact that Checketts went public with his intent to seek a deal, was major news in itself.

"There has been a lot of speculation recently about what we're going to do," Checketts said. "And since I took over, I have said we will do what we have to do to improve the Knicks. We will do anything that is in the best interest of the team. And one of the major things will be to actively explore the possibility of trading Patrick Ewing."

In discussions with Checketts, Ewing has questioned if the Knicks' latest rebuilding program will be any better than the recent ones. "He wonders why it's going to be any different," Checketts said. "I've tried to convince him it will be." Checketts' strong belief that there will be a turnaround, is due much in part to his faith in Pat Riley's coaching skills.

Yet, it was in his first face-to-face talk with Riley, that Ewing asked for a trade. He reportedly had a list of seven teams he'd like to go to — Boston, Washington, Phoenix, Golden State, Portland, and the Lakers.

This will be a very difficult trade to pull off. Ewing's $3.1 million dollar salary will be a stumbling block, and many teams will not be willing to deal the heart of their ballclub for one player, even one as good as Ewing.

But let me take a crack at this, and play GM for a moment. How about Ewing and Charles Oakley to Sacramento for Billy Owens, Duane Causewell, Anthony Bonner, and a number one draft pick in 1992 or '93 (depending on which year Shaquille O'Neal comes out)?

Or maybe send Ewing, Oakley and number one pick Greg Anthony to Golden State for Tim Hardway and Chris Mullin.

Checketts, meanwhile, will pursue a trade through the preseason, but has indicated that once the regular season starts, Ewing will stay put...

KNICKER-BOXER: The Knicks' Charles Oakley was arrested at an Atlanta restaurant for allegedly hitting a busboy. Oakley became enraged when he apparently overheard the busboy call him a scrub. I guess when the truth hits Oakley in the face, Oakley hits back.

SUMMER ACTION: Celtics first-round pick Rick Fox, Henry James of the Cleveland Cavaliers, John Williams of the Bullets, former Spurs guard David Wingate, and recent 76ers signee Tharon Mayes were selected to the all-star first team in the Southern California Summer Pro League. James, who recently re-signed with Cleveland after averaging 8.1 ppg in 37 games last season, led the summer league in scoring with 27.2 ppg while leading the Cavs entry to the championship. Fox, in three games with the Celtic entry (which also included Brian Shaw, Joe Kleine, and Stojko Vrankovic), collected 19.7 ppg and 10 rpg. Williams, who began his comeback from knee surgery late last season, averaged 19 ppg and 8.1 rpg, while Wingate notched 19.4 ppg, 6 rpg and 5.5 apg. Mayes the former Florida State star, ranked third in the league in scoring with 23.9 ppg for the Sixers, while hitting a league-high 12 three-pointers (in 30 attempts).

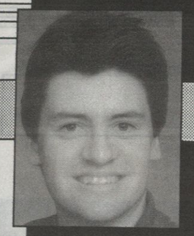
It looks like the third and final strike for former NBA All-Star Michael Ray Richardson, who twice tested positive for cocaine recently with his Italian League team. Richardson, who was banned from the NBA for cocaine use, was granted reinstatement last year. But with this latest occurrence, the NBA door will be closed again... John Salley was threatening to go to Italy, but instead, the restricted free agent re-signed with the Pistons for two years. Salley said the deal is worth just under $2 million a year... The World Champion Bulls insured that their starting five would be intact for the upcoming season, with the signing of center Bill Cartwright to a three year contract. The Bulls will reportedly pay Cartwright $2.1 million in each of the next two season, and up to $2.4 million in the third year of the deal, depending on the amount of time he spends on the roster. Cartwright earned $1.5 million dollars last season.

Time Out For Trivia

All Celtic fans have closely followed the career of Larry Bird as a Celtic. But how aware are you of his pre-Celtic days?

1. In his senior year, Larry took his team to the NCAA championship game, losing to Michigan State with Magic Johnson. Which 4 teams did they beat to get into that game?
2. During his sophomore year in high school, what injury caused him to miss almost the entire season.
3. Most everyone knows Larry grew up in French Lick, Indiana. But that was only one of two places he lived in as a child. What was the name of the other town.
4. When the Celtics drafted Larry, he was number six in the draft. The Celtics also had the number eight selection that year. Who did they draft with that selection?
5. Larry developed very early the ability to recall even details with amazing accuracy. Can you recall the nickname that Bill Fitch gave him for that ability.
6. Before his senior year in high school, the team changed coaches. Do you know the name of his new coach?
7. Which two universities did he attend?
8. How many brothers and sisters does he have, and where is Larry in the order?
9. After his sophomore year in college, he played in the NIT tournament. Which team eliminated them?
10. After his junior year, they were eliminated again in the NIT tournament, this time by Rutgers. Which player beat them at the buzzer?
11. The coach of Bradley's basketball team during Bird's senior season later became an NBA head coach. Who is it?
12. What was the name of his high school basketball coach when he first tried out for basketball?
13. Who were the other four starting players on that Indiana State team that went to the NCAA finals?
14. During one summer while he was in college, Larry played on a softball team which won the state championship. Along the way, he played a game against which player who is now considered a football superstar?
15. Just before he signed with the Celtics, he suffered an injury playing softball, which was of some concern to the Celtics. Which part of his body did he injure?
16. Larry eventually hired Bob Woolf as his agent. In the process of choosing him, a group of four men, whom were called "the Committee" by the press at the time, played a big part in the final selection. They did most of the interviewing for him. Can you name any of this "committee?"

ANSWERS: 1—Virginia, Tech, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and DePaul. 2—Broken ankle. 3—West Baden Springs. 4—Freeman Williams, who never played a game for the Celtics (trade). 5—"Kodak." 6—Gary Holland. 7—Indiana University, then Indiana State, which he graduated from. 8—Six children altogether, 5 boys and 1 girl. Larry is number 4, with three older and two younger. 9—University of Houston. 10—James Bailey. 11—Dick Versace. 12—Jim Jones. 13—Alex Gilbert, Brad Miley, Steve Reed, and Carl Nicks. 14—Joe Montana. 15—He shattered the knuckle on his right index finger. 16—Lu Weis, John Royce, Paul Denehie, and Ed Jukes.



Double Dribbles

Interesting Moves To Make Before Opening Day

By Mike Spellman

I'm going to go out on a limb (though, granted, it seems a reasonably sturdy one) to state that Anderson Hunt will be a Boston Celtic at the start of the 1991-'92 season.

How — with 12 contracts currently guaranteed (to Larry Bird, Kevin McHale, Robert Parish, Ed Pinckney, Stojko Vrankovic, Joe Kleine, Michael Smith, Reggie Lewis, Brian Shaw, Dee Brown, John Bagley and draft choice Rick Fox) and Kevin Gamble almost assured to become the 13th sometime soon and unrestricted free agent Derek Smith still not out of the picture — this might come about, however, is something on which even this shameless opinionator is not going to venture a guess.

I will, though, be more than happy to offer several rationales for why the former UNLV star should find himself wearing the green when the Celtics square off against the Charlotte Hornets in the season opener on November 1.

First and foremost, as most anyone who has even casually followed the college basketball scene in the past few years will be able to attest, Hunt is the type of long range shooter that those within the organization have openly lusted after for the backcourt since they traded Danny Ainge two and a half seasons ago. Needless to say, however, were this the only attractive ability displayed by him during his brief time under the discriminating eyes of Boston's talent evaluators, he would more than likely be plying his wares elsewhere by this time, never mind coming into training camp with a partially guaranteed contract.

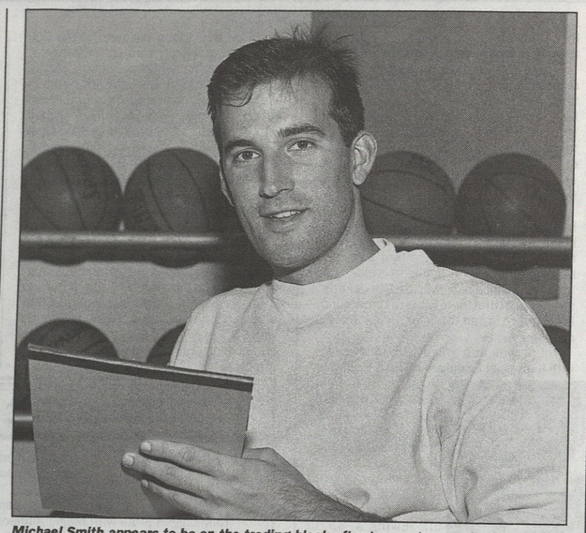
Whatsmore, while the addition of a shooter has been the most widely acknowledged area of need for the Celtics backcourt, the coaching staff has expressed a comparable amount of concern over the relative lack of speed and quickness, especially where it enters into their defensive conceptualizations, as well as the absence of a third player capable of handling the point. Based on what Hunt has shown thus far, there seem to be some pretty good reasons for optimism that he could also fill both these wants.

Now, back to the question of how.

It would, of course, be considered a monumental surprise if management did not bid adieu to Bagley even if it means (as it almost assuredly would, regardless of whether or not he is deemed physically fit for duty) eating the $550,000 he is to receive in this, the final year of his contract.

Presuming that Bags is indeed history, the 12th and final roster spot could then be opened up either through the trade of a body for some future consideration, the temporary move of someone to the injured list or the consumption of a second contract.

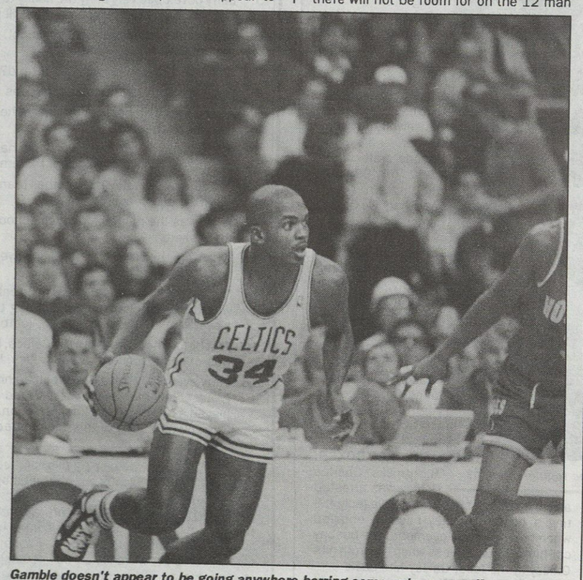
It is now a foregone conclusion that The Big 3 will be here until they each decide for themselves that they no longer wish to be. And, given the fact that these fateful self determinations can't be too much further off, it is just about as unlikely that management would be even considering parting with projected future franchise cornerstones Brown and Lewis.



Michael Smith appears to be on the trading block after two, not so-productive seasons.

Likewise, Fox and Pinckney, who are currently regarded primarily as role players yet figure heavily in the team's plans for the upcoming season, would appear to have more value to the Celtics than they would on the trade market, and thus will more than likely be kept out of swap talks.

This then leaves Shaw, Gamble, Kleine, Vrankovic and Mike Smith, one of whom there will not be room for on the 12 man roster should Hunt's services be retained.



Gamble doesn't appear to be going anywhere barring some outrageous offer.

To date, it seems as if everybody other than those empowered to do so have come up with a satisfactory rationale for trading Shaw, who popular perception says is simply holding the starting point guard slot down until Dee Brown is ready to step in. Yet, though Shaw still seems the team's most viable trade bait, the fact is that the front office has probably already turned down the most attractive offers they're going to receive for him. If nothing else, this seems a pretty good indication that the high praise Chris Ford and Dave Gavitt continue to heap on him is quite genuine.

So, what about Gamble, who, like Shaw, faded badly in post-season play? Sure, once the 6'5 swingman comes to terms, he would almost certainly bring in some pretty interesting offers if management opted to shop him around. Again, however, relying primarily on what the boys in charge have been saying, one would be inclined to conclude that Oscar isn't going anywhere, barring some outrageous offering.

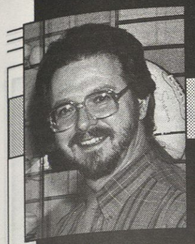
It is, of course, public knowledge that Kleine and Smith are on the trade block, but so far no offers worthy of consideration have come. Despite the fact that he appears to be the odd man out of the rotation, it is clear that management is not simply going to swap Kleine, a prototype NBA back up center, for the sake of opening up a slot. It is questionable, however, whether the same can be said for Smith, a considerable disappointment in his first two seasons.

In fact, it would not come as that great a shock, should all other attempts to make room for Hunt fail, to see Smith handed his outright release, even with the remaining two years of his contract guaranteeing him a total of $1,275,000. Ultimately, this course could very well prove the best for Smith, an intelligent and well rounded player at the offensive end but, to date, a liability at the defensive end and on meeting rebounding requirements.

Lastly, one has to wonder what the decision makers' reaction would be to any serious offer for Vrankovic, especially after his pathetic showing at rookie/free agent camp, where his offense was non-existent and his work in the blocks was worse. According to all reports, the big Yugoslav picked up his play in the L.A. Summer League, particularly at the defensive end (5.5 blocks in just over 30 minutes per game). There's no denying that Stojko has got a great deal of potential from an athletic standpoint (7-2 guys with 37-inch vertical leaps don't exactly come along every day, you know). However, the bottom line is that he'll be 28 in January, a good age for players who are coming into their own but not very good for a fellow who's still quite a ways off from shaking the project tag.

Of course, management could always postpone the inevitable should Larry not be sufficiently recovered from his off-season back surgery, and be forced to begin the season on the inactive list, or if one of the prospective lesser used players suddenly comes down with a convenient malady that would force his placement on the IL.

CLOSING THOUGHT — In addition to the hope of adding a defensive minded small forward like Fox and a shooter of Hunt's caliber, Gavitt and Ford have also made no secret of the fact that they'd like to tack on more speed and rebounding to the frontline by bringing in a young athletic power forward. Therefore, it really shouldn't come as a great surprise if anyone fitting this description (rookie camp standouts Pat Tompkins and Reggie Hanson?) who's invited to training camp is given more than the courteous once over.



Casey's Corner

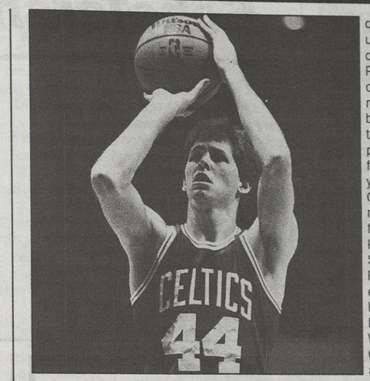
Welcome To The World Of Collectibles

By Joie Casey

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This column has been established as a result of our editorial questionnaire. Many of our readers requested information on sports collecting and Celtics collectibles. We are fortunate to have received a regular commitment to produce this column from one of the foremost experts on the collecting of sports memorabilia in the world. All of us will be able to get an excellent understanding of the values of collecting and some of you may even discover that you already have some very valuable items just laying around your house. This column will start at the beginning and educate us all. The industry of collecting has exploded in recent years with many different trends. Joie Casey will explain these trends and tell you why certain items are "hot" and why others are not. We at Celtics Pride hope you all enjoy and benefit from this unique column.*

Hi, I'm Joie Casey. I have been asked to share information with you about sports memorabilia collecting and in specific basketball memorabilia collecting. I am pleased to have the opportunity to write for Celtics Pride and hope that I can explain and simplify collecting for you. It is my intent that this regular column will provide you with dialogue and insight into collecting with special emphasis on the collecting of basketball cards and basketball memorabilia. Each column will be dedicated to Celtics fans and will focus primarily on basketball and Celtics collectibles. If you are not a collector, you will be exposed to some new and exciting ideas that will help you build your own collection of Celtics memorabilia, which could be fun and financially rewarding to you. If you are currently a collector of sports memorabilia, you may want to share some of your expertise through Casey's Corner. I would like to hear from any of you with regard to your questions or thoughts on this column. I will be glad to address your questions in future issues of Celtics Pride. I bring to you thirty-two years of collecting sports cards and memorabilia and eighteen years of buying, trading and selling these treasures. My favorite basketball player is Danny Ainge, who had his finest moments with the Celtics, so you will note some definite pro Celtics bias in some of my commentary. I will not try to hide this, in fact, I have vivid memories of K.C.Jones, Sam Jones, Bill Sharman, Heinsohn, Cousy, Russell, Don Nelson, Satch Sanders, Nate Archibald, Jo Jo White, Havlicek, Maxwell, Bird, Parish, McHale, D.J. and of course Bill Walton when he was with the Celtics. I have been a Celtics fan for a lot of years, and I cherish so many exciting moments that the Celtics have brought me over the years. In 1980, my partner Ed Anderson and I opened one of the first fifty card stores in the United States in Salt Lake City, Utah (yes, there are many Celtics fans in Salt Lake City). Ed and I represented "The Baseball Card Shop" at everyone of the twelve national card shows beginning with the first show in Los Angeles. There are less than twenty four card dealers in the country who have been represented at all the national card shows and "The Baseball Card Shop" in Salt Lake City is one of them. Currently, I am a partner in the "Field of Dreams" memorabilia stores that are being built in major shopping malls across the country. Today, we operate eight "Field of Dreams" locations to be open by this holiday season. We have over six million sports cards in inventory and carry many exciting sports memorabilia items including autographed baseballs, footballs, basketballs, lithographs and photographs. There has been an explosion of collectible cards in this country. There are boxing cards, golf cards, rodeo rider cards, cards for Indy 500 drivers, jockeys and many, many more. You might be surprised to find out that the most collected cards are often the least collectible. All have different aesthetic values, historical values and dollar values. Recently, the all-time highest price was paid for a piece of memorabilia when Bruce McNall and Wayne Gretzky paid $451,000 for the T-206 Honus Wagner card. It more than tripled the previous highest price paid. Additional, $58,000 was just paid for a 1952 Mickey Mantle card. That is the highest price paid for a post World War 11 card. Also, a Mickey Mantle jersey just went for over $70,000. Just imagine if he had been a Celtic instead. A new record was recently set for the highest price ever paid for a piece of football memorabilia. An 18 carat gold Randall Cunningham, ACTION PACKED card brought $25,000 at a charity auction. Again, this column will be for you, the ardent Celtics fan. If you would like to see any specific items covered here, please write to me at: Field of Dreams, 72-027 Desert Drive, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270 .

In my next column, I will explore how to get started in collecting. I will address the best ways to start, depending on your budget and areas of interest. Future columns will deal with the growing problem of authenticity of autographs, also collectibles from Celtics championship years and playoff programs. I do enjoy writing this column for you and I hope you can profit from it.



My favorite basketball player is Danny Ainge, who had his finest moments with the Celtics.

1991-92 Boston Celtics Schedule

November — 1991

Fri.	1	—	H	Charlotte	7:30
Sat.	2	—	A	Washington	7:30
Tue.	5	—	A	Miami	8:00
Wed.	6	—	H	Chicago	7:30
Fri.	8	—	H	Atlanta	7:30
Sun.	10	—	A	Portland	5:00
Tue.	12	—	A	Sacramento	7:30
Wed.	13	—	A	Phoenix	7:30
Fri.	15	—	H	Philadelphia	7:30
Sat.	16	—	A	Charlotte	7:30
Wed.	20	—	H	Indiana	7:30
Sat.	23	—	A	New Jersey	7:30
Mon.	25	—	H	Washington*	7:30
Wed.	27	—	H	Orlando	7:30
Fri.	29	—	H	LA Lakers	8:00
Sat.	30	—	A	Atlanta	7:30

December — 1991

Wed.	4	—	H	Miami	7:30
Fri.	6	—	H	New York	7:30
Mon.	9	—	H	Denver	7:30
Fri.	13	—	H	Seattle	7:30
Sat.	14	—	A	New York	7:30
Tue.	17	—	A	Orlando	7:30
Wed.	18	—	H	Milwaukee	7:30
Fri.	20	—	H	Utah	7:30
Sat.	21	—	A	Miami	7:30
Wed.	25	—	A	Chicago	8:00
Fri.	27	—	A	Seattle (K)	7:00
Sat.	28	—	A	Denver	7:00
Mon.	30	—	A	LA Clippers	7:30

January — 1992

Fri.	3	—	H	Cleveland	7:30
Sat.	4	—	A	Minnesota	7:00
Mon.	6	—	H	Sacramento	7:30
Wed.	8	—	H	New York	7:30
Fri,	10	—	H	Minnesota	7:30
Sat.	11	—	A	New York	7:30
Wed.	15	—	H	New Jersey	7:30
Fri.	17	—	H	Philadelphia	7:30
Sun.	19	—	H	San Antonio	5:00
Mon.	20	—	A	Cleveland	3:30
Wed.	22	—	H	Orlando	7:30
Fri.	24	—	H	Phoenix	7:30
Sun.	26	—	H	Detroit	12:30
Tue.	28	—	A	Washington	7:30
Fri.	31	—	A	Milwaukee	7:00

February — 1992

Sat.	1	—	A	Philadelphia	7:30
Wed.	5	—	H	Houston	8:00
Tue.	11	—	A	San Antonio	7:00
Wed.	12	—	A	Dallas	7:30
Fri.	14	—	A	Houston	7:30
Sun.	16	—	A	LA Lakers	12:30
Mon.	17	—	A	Utah	7:30
Wed.	19	—	A	Golden State	5:00
Fri.	21	—	H	Charlotte (H)	7:30
Sun.	23	—	A	Indiana	1:00
Tue.	25	—	A	New Jersey	7:30
Wed.	26	—	H	Indiana	7:30
Fri.	28	—	A	Atlanta	8:00

March — 1992

Sun.	1	—	H	Dallas	7:30
Wed.	4	—	H	Orlando	7:30
Fri.	6	—	H	LA Clippers	7:30
Sun.	8	—	A	Orlando	7:30
Tue.	10	—	A	Miami	7:30
Wed.	11	—	A	Chicago	7:00
Fri.	13	—	H	New Jersey*	7:30
Sun.	15	—	H	Portland	12:00
Tue.	17	—	A	Milwaukee	7:30
Wed.	18	—	H	Cleveland	7:30
Fri.	20	—	A	Detroit	8:00
Sun.	22	—	H	Golden State	2:30
Wed.	25	—	A	New Jersey	7:30
Fri.	27	—	H	Detroit	7:30
Sun.	29	—	H	Atlanta	7:30

April — 1992

Wed.	1	—	H	Washington	7:30
Fri.	3	—	A	Indiana	8:00
Sun.	5	—	H	Chicago	12:00
Tue.	7	—	A	Cleveland	7:30
Wed.	8	—	H	New York	7:30
Fri.	10	—	H	Milwaukee	7:30
Sun.	12	—	A	Charlotte	6:00
Tue.	14	—	A	Philadelphia	7:30
Wed.	15	—	A	Detroit	8:00
Sun.	19	—	H	Miami	1:00

*** — Denotes a home game in Hartford, CT. (K) — Denotes an away game in Seattle, WA. All games on WEEI (590 AM) radio. All times are local times, and are all "PM."**

Colin Boyd, seated far left, was selected as one of the winners in the Celtics' scholarship program.

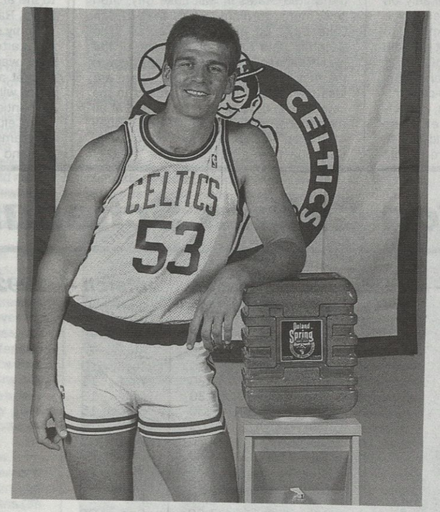
Local Student Wins Celtics' Scholarship Award

The NBA has a scholarship program. Through each NBA team, two deserving seniors are each awarded a $1,000 scholarship. The Boston Celtics have selected Colin Boyd of Lynn, MA, as one of their two winners.

Colin Sullivan Boyd, son of Joseph H. Boyd and Jo Sullivan of Lynn, graduated from Lynn Classical High School in June and will attend Tufts University in September. A member of the National Honor Society and the Science Honor League, Colin was a North Shore Chamber of Commerce Honor Scholar and the recipient of the Lynn Teachers' Union labor history scholarship.He has been a member of the Student Council for four years, and was a co-captain of the football and baseball teams, although a neck injury kept him from playing football during his senior year. He plans to play baseball for Tufts University next year.

He has been honored by the Council of Christians and Jews and the Jewish War Veterans Award, and was chosen as a Harry Agganis Memorial Scholarship winner. And he has been a avid Larry Bird and Celtics fan for many years!

Joe Kleine enjoys Poland Spring at home and at courtside.



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Please mention the Boston Celtics when calling and you'll receive our Special Offer.*

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**New customers only, bottle deposit required.*

Preferred by the Boston Celtics

COLOR IT GREEN
...continued from page 5

What a tough choice it must have been for the Hornets between Larry Johnson and Billy Owens on draft day. They couldn't lose on either one. The Nets are the ones that may really have blown it with all due respect to Georgia Tech guard Kenny Anderson. They must not think that much of Mookie Blaylock anymore.

Respected basketball men, Willis Reed the team's player personnel director and veteran coach Bill Fitch, both wanted the kid from Syracuse, the 6-9 Owens, likened to Magic Johnson with good reason. The powers that be insisted on the flashy Anderson for his — get this — drawing card value. I thought winning brought in fans...Wasn't Denver's choice of Temple guard Mark Macon curious considering they already have a talented young second-year guard in Chris Jackson...When it is all said and done at the season's end, Dallas rookie Doug Smith may well turn out to be the most dominant rookie. Considering all the Roy Tarpley problems, he was a wise investment...Didn't you know it was only a matter of time before Kevin Loughery was coaching again? Heat fans will quickly forget the immortal Ron Rothstein with Loughery's style...Considering the Spurs' early playoff exit and the less-than-friendly situation between Larry Brown and San Antonio owner Red McCombs, Brown could be on very shaky ground this season...Plans to build a new basketball palace in Seattle have been called off. The Sonics will continue to play in the Coliseum, built in 1962 for the World's Fair.

In case you missed it, the Knicks cut Kenny Walker loose...Rony Seikaly signed a huge contract to continue playing the pivot in Miami...It continues to puzzle me why the Celtics have considered moving backup center Joe Kleine when second-string centers are as rare these days as a good nickle cigar. It is even more baffling that nobody seemed to want him when he was dangled as trade bait.

If I get to vote, I cast mine for keeping big Joe.

Jim Bianchine is a columnist for the Newburyport Daily News, in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Jim is regularly assigned to cover the Boston Celtics.

American Liver Foundation Honors Celtics Coach Chris Ford As Boston's 1991 Coach Of The Year

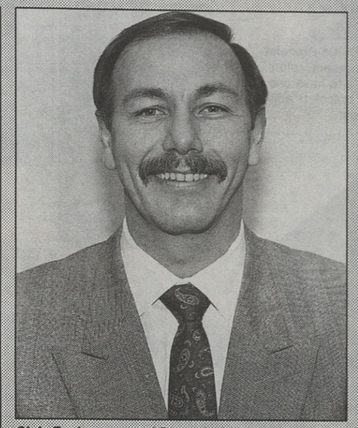
Exciting plans are now underway for the third annual All-Star Tribute Dinner this year honoring Boston Celtics Coach Chris Ford. This star-studded black tie gala will be held on Monday, September 23 at the Boston Marriott Copley Place, to benefit the American Liver Foundation.

The All-Star Tribute Dinner has traditionally been the "talk of the town" for both its fundraising success, and its ability to attract dynamic and distinguished leaders from the worlds of business, entertainment and professional sports, all for one common cause.

In honoring Chris Ford, the American Liver Foundation recognizes his commitments to his team and his community. As a player and now a coach, Chris has developed and maintained a reputation for leadership, commitment and spirited involvement in Boston for more than a decade.

Funds raised through the All-Star Tribute Dinner support the important research and educational programs of the American Liver Foundation. The New England Chapter has, for the fourth consecutive year, received the National Award of Excellence for being the most outstanding Chapter in the Country, and the funds raised from this event contribute significantly to this honorable distinction.

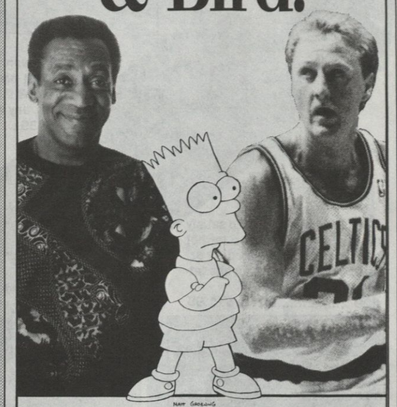
Boston Celtics CEO Dave Gavitt will serve as honorary chairman and WBZ-TV's Bob Lobel will be Master of Ceremonies for this special night. Additionally, former Boston Bruins coaches Mike Milbury and Terry O'Reilly, both past recipients of the award and important community leaders, along with past and present Bruins' and Celtics' players will add much sparkle and excitement to the event.



Chris Ford was named Boston's 1991 Coach of the Year by the American Liver Foundation.

There are many ways that you can be a part of this great event, from purchasing a reserved seat at the diner for $225, or even reserving a full table to advertising in the program or simply making a contribution. For more details, please call (617) 542-1118.

Bill, Bart & Bird.



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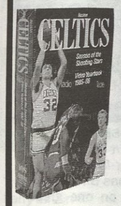

• CELTICS VIDEO YEARBOOK 1985-86 •
NEW NEW NEW NEW NEW ITEM!! The year of the "shooting stars." This exclusive video contains footage no one has ever seen before. Pre-game planning session, half-time huddles, post-game analyses. Re-live the most thrilling moments of the playoffs with the Houston Rockets. Experience the Celts pain and their joy, share the excitement of their triumphs, witness quiet moments with family at home. 48 min.
#15 ..... $39.95

• HISTORY OF THE NBA •
This new 1990 video will have you re-live five decades of dynasties and rivalries. Watch the incredible exploits of such legends of the game as Dave Cowen, Bill Walton, "Pistol" Pete Maravich, Larry Bird, and more.
#48 ..... $24.95

• DYNASTY RENEWED •
1981. Robert Parish and Kevin Mchale joined Larry Bird to rebuild a new dynasty. They would face the 76'ers and Dr. J in a wild series that saw six of the seven games decided in the final minute. Witness all the action in the finals against the surprisingouston Rockets that will never be forgotten! 30 min.
#158 ..... $24.95

• NBA'S AWESOME ENDINGS •
Here's the tape that definitely proves "it ain't over 'til it's over!" Includes the most incredible last-second swishes, buzzer-beating buckets, and zappy endings in NBA history. Larry's steals and assists in the 1987 playoffs enabling them to advance to the Finals over the Detroit Pistons. 30 minutes of incredible action.
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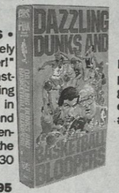

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Features past and present superstars of the NBA in their most glorious...as well as their most embarrassing moments. 45 min.
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• CELTICS '87 •
Home of the Brave 86-87 season plus Sweet Sixteen 85-86 Championship season. A powerhouse double feature re-living the 85-86 championship season. Go onto 86-87 when three time MVP Larry Bird and an injury plagued team battle the Lakers in the Finals. 60 min.
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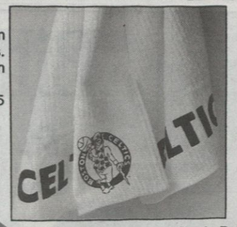
• 1986 NBA ALL STAR WEEKEND •
Experience the whole All-Star weekend starting with the Legends Classic, the Long Distance Shootout and the Slam dunk championship, and of course the game itself with Bird and McHale at their best.
#168 ..... $29.95

• RED ON ROUNDBALL •
Learn basketball from the pros. Starring Red Auerbach and a host of basketball greats. Dave Cowens, Bob Cousy, Tiny Archbald, Elgin Baylor, Bill Walton, and more.
#34 ..... $27.95

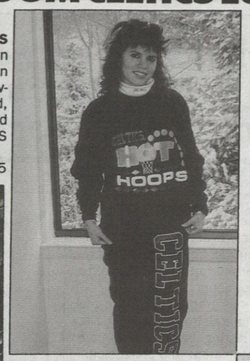
• PRIDE AND PASSION •
1984. The Celtics and Lakers relive all the pride and passion as the NBA's most storied rivals climax in one of basketball's most exciting and memorable seasons. 60 min.
#153 ..... $29.95

• NBA SUPERSTARS •
This is one to play and play again? Includes incredible footage of the NBA's leading superstars (Larry Bird) with spectacular superstar hit music! Billy Joel's "This is the Time," Whitney Houston's "Greatest Love of All," Janet Jackson's "Control," and many more. This 32-minute tape captures the spirit of the game like nothing else.
#8 ..... $17.95

Game Towel
This is the official towel used on the bench during all Celtic games. 21"x 43" ribbed weave with Celtics logo in green.
#40 .....$10.95

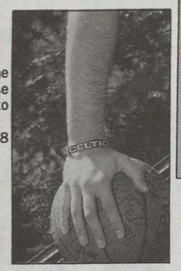


Sweat-Suit
NEW!!! CELTICS HOT HOOPS sweats heavyweight fleece in black with bold yellow and green graphics. The pants have a covered elastic waist with a drawcord, on-seam pockets and covered elastic leg bottoms. CELTICS down left leg.
#10 .....$64.95



Reggie Lewis T-Shirt
Reggie now has his own t-shirt in black with an action photo and Lewis in bright green screened on the right side.
#51 .....$14.95

Celtic Bracelet
Woven in team colors. Be the first one's to have one of these NEW fad bracelets adjustable to fit any wrist.
#39 .....$2.98



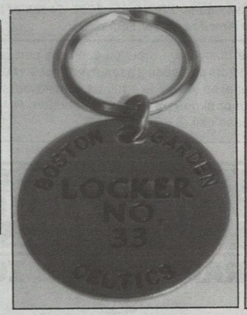
Sports Bottle
A quick convenient way to satisfy that big thirst. Insulated for hot or cold drinks in a rugged 32 oz. size. Celtic green with white lettering.
#29 .....$11.95

Celtics Swatch
Great new (Swatch-like) watch. Quartz movement, water resistant, 1 yr. warranty by mfg. lightweight for comfortable fit. Features Celtics green band with logo on the face.
#2 .....$29.95

Window Sign
5"x5" popular window insignia with suction cup.
#58 .....$3.95

Turtleneck
Great NEW way to show off your team, looks great alone or under a sweater. 100% cotton interlock jersey with lycra spandex collar and cuffs. White only with Celtics on the neck in green.
#42 .....$23.95

Post It Notes
These notes turn pro. You'll be able to stick them anywhere. Sold in packages of three.
#37 .....$5.95



Round Key Ring
Solid brass key ring to let you know who's LOCKER #33!! in the Boston Garden.
#33 .....$6.95

Parking Sign
Show off your team loyalty with this 12"x18" heavy duty gauge styrene fan parking sign.
#4 .....$14.95

Card T-Shirt
This green t-shirt is the new card shirt of your favorite players in action. It has Bird, Lewis and McHale all on one great shirt.
#52 .....$14.95

Bird Block Lettered T-Shirt
New for the 1991 season. Larry Bird 100% cotton t-shirt with Celtics Boston Basketball on the front and Bird Celtics on the back in a bold block letter style with Bird in action shooting. See new shorts for front view #50. #49 .....$14.95

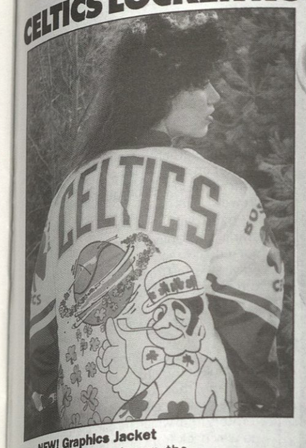
Butt Print Shorts
New for the 1991 season. These grey shorts are the newest in the spring line up and a must for the Celtic Fan. The left leg is screened with the logo and Boston Celtics in a block print, but on the back is Celtics in block letters screened in green with logo. See new Bird shirt for back view #49. #50 .....$25.95

"Aerial Assault"
This NEW t-shirt is an all over look for the Celtics. The wrap-around print features the Celtics with graphics and logos in all areas around the shirt. The back of the shirt features a unique photo of Boston's skyline. 100% cotton t-shirt available in Large and X-Large only, in white.
#14 .....$15.95

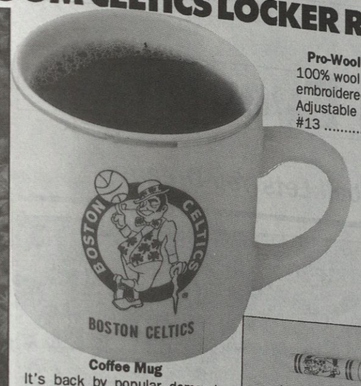
Sleep Shirt
Super fans will love this super-sized T-shirt. Jumbo graphics are screened on the front. One size fits all.
#25 .....$19.95

Double T-Shirt
This rugged "double" t-shirt has a black body with team-color in green at the neck and sleeve. Roll up the sleeves for the look of two tees without the layers. 100% cotton.
#36 .....$19.99

CELTICS LOCKER ROOM CELTICS LOCKER ROOM CELTICS LOCKER ROOM

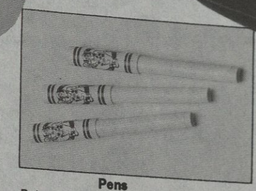


NEW! Graphics Jacket
Celtics logo in full-color on the back of this beautifully detailed jacket. You'll also find the logo on the front and team colors throughout. These are the ONLY official team NBA graphics jackets you can buy. 100% oxford polyester body with warm flannel lining inside, with knit collar, cuffs and waistband.
#24 .....$64.95



Coffee Mug
It's back by popular demand. This white ceramic mug is trimmed in gold with the Celtics logo located in the center.
#31 .....$11.95

Pro-Wool Cap — By Starter
100% wool — Black with direct-embroidered team name in green. Adjustable back to fit all.
#13 .....$16.95



Pens
Put your team loyalty in writing with this great three-pak rollerball pen set.
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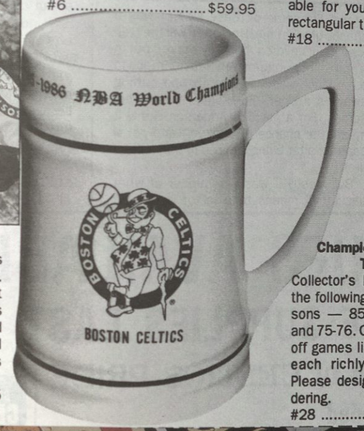
HOT TICKET Key Ring
Get your Celtic season pass here! Sold out in the Garden, but available for you in a solid brass rectangular ticket replica.
#18 .....$7.95

Beach Towel
A colorful billboard of your Celtics logo and name.
#41 .....$24.95

Celtics Media Guide
Get all the facts, stats and bio's on all the Celtics stars in the new 1990-91 Media Guide.
#11 .....$9.95

NEW!! Player Jacket
The back of this jacket depicts Larry Bird in full color action shot. Celtics logo on front left chest with #33 under it and Larry's autograph above. 100% oxford polyester body with warm flannel lining inside, knit collar, cuffs and waistband.
#5 .....$67.95



Championship Souvenir Tankards
Collector's Item! A tankard for the following championship seasons — 85-86, 83-84, 80-81, and 75-76. Collect them all, playoff games listed on the back of each richly banded tankard. Please designate year when ordering.
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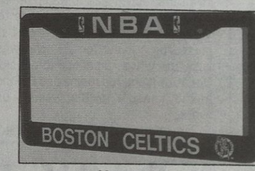

License Plate Frame
This heavy duty black plastic frame with NEON green BOSTON CELTICS will certainly stand out on any vehicle.
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Suspenders
Support Your Pants while you support the Celtics, with these great NEW suspenders in team colors.
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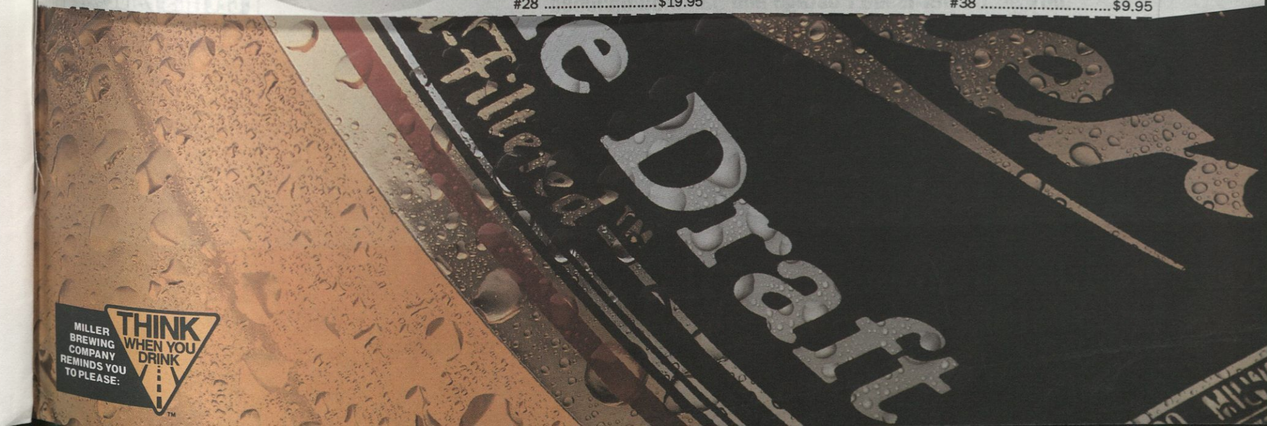
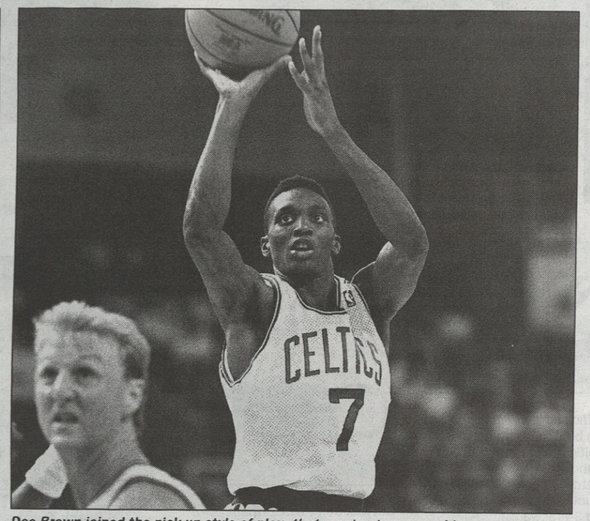


The Fan's Eyeview

Basketball Lets You Dream

By Glenn Rifkin



Dee Brown joined the pick-up style of play, that most veterans avoid.

I'm racing downcourt in the brilliant sunshine of a recent Sunday morning pickup game. My Reeboks hardly touch the court as I glide to the hoop with the basketball flicking off my fingertips, chunkachunk against the macadam, tied by an invisible string to my deft maneuvers.

I spot the defender out of the corner of my eye. He is gaining ground, fueled by sudden anger at having been stripped of the ball in a stunning, slight-of-hand steal. I feel a similar burst now as the orange-painted cylinder looms into view, a legal step and a half away. I rise like a geyser, twisting upward toward a large, fluffy cumulus cloud. I pull the ball ever higher in both hands, and just as my pursuer crashes into me full force, I jam the spheroid down through the twine with relish. The impact takes us both tumbling into the grass near the edge of the court, but I feel no pain. Two! I cry, plus the foul.

Okay, okay. So it didn't happen quite like that. I pulled off the steal but I can no more jam a basketball than fly to the moon. I spent most of the morning watching frisky 20-year olds race downcourt with fast-breaks off missed shots. I generally trail the play, which in my case, means waiting down at the other end while a lonely teammate faces a four-on-one. The mind is willing, but the aging Achilles tendons scream "No."

But hey, basketball lets you dream, especially on hot summer days on playgrounds where old guys match up with high school kids and yell out cool things like "Look left" or "Switch" or "take him off the dribble." It doesn't matter if some of the players have guts jiggling over the waistbands of their shorts and more hair on their chests than on their heads. The game is the thing. The sweat pours freely and the ball glides through the hoop just like the big time.

It is why the Babson College gym was filled with true hoop fanatics on several sweltering July nights to watch the Celtics rookie camp. This was a chance to see some helter-skelter pickup style ball disguised as a tryout for the unknowns and hopefuls. It was a chance to get close to Dee Brown and Joe Kleine and Ed Pinckney as they joined a fray that veterans usually avoid.

The camp was serious, don't get me wrong. For some of these kids, it was a chance of a lifetime. How often will they tell their grandchildren that they worked out in a real Celtics uniform with Red Auerbach in attendance watching intently and puffing away on a cigar? For some, it was very serous. For a guy like Anderson Hunt, it meant the chance to show off and get a contract after being ignored in the college draft.

But mostly it was a reminder of what basketball means to a lot of people, a chance to run and jump and sweat and yell and shoot. It brought the game to a level that the little kids could understand and the older guys could relate to. There was M.L. Carr, stuffed into a Celtics' workout uniform, charging up and down the floor with the patented smile on his face and chatter on his lips. He even tossed in a few from way outside, bringing cheers from the crowd.

Posed with M.L. was Dee Brown, a swirling, leaping hurricane of a player, poised to crack the big time. The crowd gravitates to Brown like he was a 10-year veteran, oohing and aahhing his every move.

For his part, Brown is caught somewhere between awe and nirvana, his head still spinning from the sudden and burgeoning fame that is engulfing his young life. His youthful enthusiasm is still prevalent but suddenly the demands on his time and space make it clear that he has entered a territory from which he can't return. There's no way back from greatness to anonymity. But it isn't lost on Dee that a year earlier he was not much more than a curiosity at this same camp.

He can't blend in with the nameless wannabes who have no realistic shot at making the Celtics, guys like Stephen Thompson, who knew stardom in college, or Pat Tompkins, who spent four years in the obscurity of Madison, Wisconsin. But he is not so far from where they are that he can't relate. The good thing about a camp in July is that there is no such thing as failure when the sun is out and there are balls to toss around.

The whole atmosphere, in fact, is like a giant pickup game that ought to be outdoors, not here in a stuffy gym. It's the summer and hoops shrugs off the formalities; there are leagues but really it is all about choosing up sides and running. No refs, no clocks, no buzzers. Just sneakers and concrete.

In just a few weeks, the Celtics will gather again. Bird will be tan and probably make us all forget the last painful weeks of last season. Dee Brown will be quiet, knowing that the second year can be a lot tougher than the first. Summer hoop will fade faster than Bird's tan, and the real stuff will begin, wistfully, I suspect, for a lot of us.

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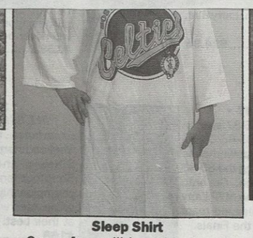

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Double T-Shirt

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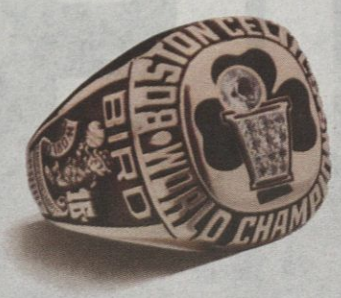
#36 .....$19.99

CELTICS LOCKER ROOM CELTICS LOCKER ROOM CELTICS LOCKER ROOM

#1 DRAFT CHOICE OF CELTIC FANS

CELTICS' PRIDE



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